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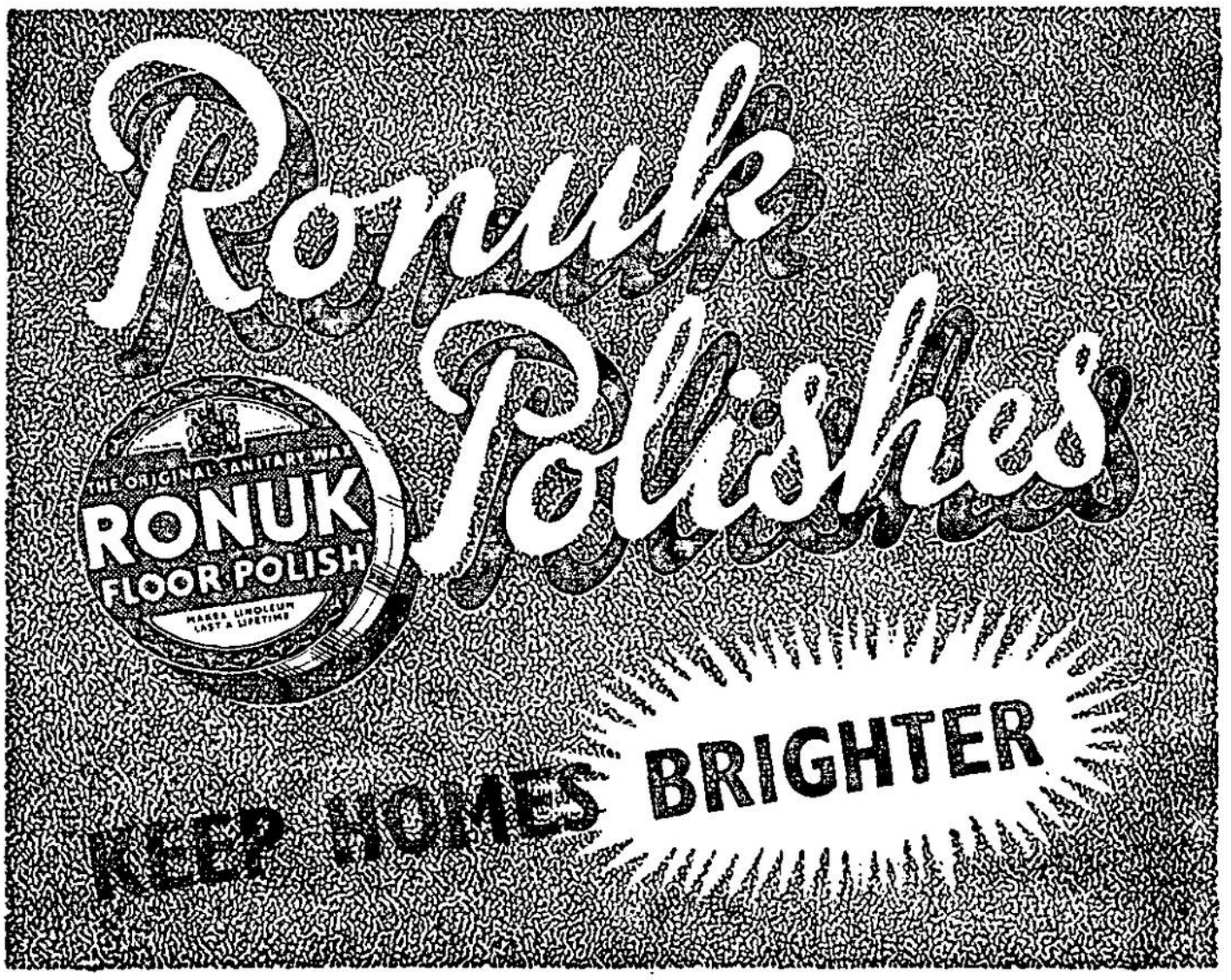

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ARGOSY

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Printed in England by WITHY GROVE PRESS LTD., MANCHESTER, and published on the 10th of each month by THE AMALGAMATED PRESS LTD., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for Transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Subscription Rates: Inland and Abroad: £1 0s. 6d. for 12 months, 10s. 3d. for 6 months. Canada: 19s. 6d. for 12 months, 9s. 9d. for 6 months. ADVERTISEMENT OFFICES: Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C.4. Sole Agents: Australasia, Messrs. GORDON & GOTCH, LTD.; South Africa, CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY, LTD.; Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Messrs. KINGSTONS LTD.

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Frost-Flowers

GRASS afield wears silver thatch;
Palings all are edged with rime;
Frost-flowers pattern round the latch;
Cloud nor breeze dissolve the clime;

When the waves are solid floor,
And the clods are iron-bound,
And the boughs are crystall'd hoar,
And the red leaf nailed a-ground.

When the fieldfare's flight is slow,
And a rosy vapour rim,
Now the sun is small and low,
Belts along the region dim.

When the ice-crack flies and flaws,
Shore to shore, with thunder shock,
Deeper than the evening daws,
Clearer than the village clock.

When the rusty blackbird strips
Bunch by bunch, the coral thorn;
And the pale day-crescent dips,
New to heaven, a slender horn.

LORD DE TABLEY, 1835-1895

THE WIDOW TRAP

"I love the women in full bloom," said my grandfather, "at fifty a woman is perfect"

by ROBERT FONTAINE

GRANDPA used to plague my uncles as if they were small boys, urging them to stop drinking, to forget women, to consider the serious aspects of life. But he himself was no example.

When Papa would mention casually that a man of Grandpa's one hundred and five pounds should be careful of his adventures, Grandpa observed: "It is all muscle, you understand."

That Grandpa himself was not so confident in that muscle became apparent when he began to court the Widow LaChance.

He appeared, one evening, in the dining room, as dapper and bright as a bowl of *Maman's* pansies. His skin was pink from rubbing and sparkled like the imitation diamond attached to his cravat.

He wore a white linen jacket, with only one slight stain from a brandy chocolate on it. He wore immaculate pale blue trousers. And he wore a sailor straw with a blue and white band.

The hat was tilted at an angle that seemed to ignore gravity. He carried a yellow cane, which he twirled like the drum-major of the Governor General's Foot Guards.

He announced to the awed assembly in the room that he was en route "*faire l'amour!*"

In French, of course, to make love is to make love. It admits of no innocent interpretations.

We all laughed at this boast.

"It will be your death," noted my Uncle Felix. "Under such conditions the arteries . . . or is it the veins . . ."

"It will stop your teeth from aching," Papa interrupted.

Grandpa's eyes twinkled and he executed a little dance step.

"The one who knows of a better way to die, will he step forward?"

"You will knock your legs together and crack them with that dancing," my Uncle Desmonde laughed.

"I am two of you in every sense," Grandpa snorted. "On, then, to the beautiful Widow LaChance."

"The guillotine," Felix observed, "awaits."

Later, by discreet inquiries and some listening to confidential

whispers, I learned something about Grandpa's affairs with the Widow. He had a rival, it appeared, one Gunboat Hodge, a man who drove a team of brewery horses and who often won prizes for the largest chest expansion in Ontario.

Bending a crowbar was a pleasure to Gunboat, and frequently, at Sunday-school picnics, I had seen him lie on his back and permit large boulders to be broken on his stomach with a sledge hammer.

Grandpa, at his age and weight, was no match for this monster.

My grandfather, apparently, did not know of his rival when he first began to court the Widow. My grandfather was, above all, wise. He was not a man to encourage violence, especially to his own delicate person. He was, in short, not the type for any sort of duel.

I asked *Maman* one day how Grandpa had met the Widow.

" It was at a church minstrel," she said soberly. " Grandpa sang *On the Road to Mandalay* and Mme. LaChance was slightly moved. But when he danced the buck-and-wing, his sprightliness captivated her, even though he was in burnt cork."

" Ah, then," I surmised. " It is a good thing to know, this buck-and-wing ? "

" Yes," Papa joined in, " it will be a comfort to you in your old age."

" But why," I asked, sincerely puzzled, " does Grandpa wish to love the Widow LaChance when, already, he loves . . ." (here, I began to count on my fingers) " Mme. Frechete, the modiste ; Mlle. Cocteau, the teacher of the ballet ; Mme. Pernod, the *chanteuse* ; Mlle. McPhail . . ."

" Enough. Hold ! " cried Papa. " You will be all day at that ! "

" Is this, after all, something to discuss with a young boy ? " *Maman* asked, a little upset.

" So," said Papa, " if he does not discuss it with us, he will discuss it with others less intelligent and with minds perhaps more evil."

My mother smiled gently.

" Yes, perhaps. But in my day we did not discuss the love affairs of the grandfather with the grandson."

" A pity, too," Papa said.

" But why ? " I persisted. " Why does Grandpa . . . ? "

" With some people," my father explained, " it is butterflies. With your Uncle Desmonde it is ornate garters ; with Felix it is useless information; with Grandpa it is beautiful women over fifty."

" *Ah, oui,*" I commented. This began to make sense.

" Over fifty, mind you," my father continued. He was now talking really to tease *Maman*, but he spoke to me. " Grandfather is not the one to go chasing after young girls. He knows his place

in the scheme of amorous things. Nor is he the type of which one reads in the American Sunday papers, the ones in whose trunk are found, by the police, middle-aged torsos, previously insured for enormous sums."

"That," said *Maman*, "will be enough, dear."

After this discussion I sought an appointment with Grandpa in order to understand his attitude more completely.

We spoke of many things as he sipped his violet wine and rocked in his chair. At last we came to the point.

"It is like this," Grandpa explained. "I love the women in full bloom."

"Big?"

"Not big," Grandpa corrected. "Complete. It is as if one held up a rose to the light of the sun!" Grandpa raised his wine to the electric light. "Nothing more, you understand."

"Nothing more," I agreed, not knowing precisely what more there was.

"At fifty," Grandpa went on, warming to the subject, "a woman is perfect."

To me, it seemed a long time to wait, but I offered no comment, being satisfied at the revelations.

"At forty-five she is not yet fully developed. I am speaking now, of course, of the heart, the spirit, the mind. After fifty . . . let us say at fifty-five, she wilts. *Comprends-tu?*"

"*Oui*," I agreed. I saw in my mind long rows of women of fifty-five, their heads drooping like sunflowers.

"*Now*," Grandpa continued, "we have in Ottawa many women of fifty, at their choicest year. And we have so few men to give them appreciation. And why?"

"Why?"

"Because men old enough to appreciate them are already married and so have lost their sense of the appreciation of beauty. Or if by chance they are still single, they have ulcers of the stomach. There has never been a romantic man with ulcers of the stomach. It is impossible. I speak not with cynicism. I speak with compassion. My stomach is as cast iron."

Thus spake Grandpa.

Well, it was only after he had been at tea with the Widow LaChance several times, admiring her Limoges and her Courbet, that he realized he had pointed his cane into a nest of hornets.

Gunboat, having taken a day off from disturbing the peace, rolling beer barrels noisily into cellars, called on the Widow.

He appeared, according to Grandpa: ". . . in a tight-fitting seersucker suit which caused him to look like a large ox tongue

which had been wrapped hastily in wrinkled brown paper by the butcher's small son. An oversize ox tongue wearing size twelve shoes. He had around his red neck a bow tie attached with a band of elastic. His face was bright and rough from scrubbing, like a kitchen floor. In his hands, which were like bunches of long, wilted carrots, he carried pussywillows and a box of chocolates.

"When he saw me he placed the gifts on the table and shouted like a bull: 'Who is this?'

"The dear lady replied: 'This is a charming *raconteur* who amuses me enormously.'

"'A what?' bellowed the bull.

"'Pray be seated,' Mme. LaChance requested graciously.

"For the next two hours" (Grandpa is still speaking), "I talked rapidly and for the most part in French, which M. Gunboat does not comprehend except when it is profane. I spoke about the painting of Monet, the music of Debussy, and the French Chamber of Deputies. I imagined this would cause M. Gunboat to fall asleep. It did not, alas. He is possessed of an amazing resistance. In fact, listening to my own buzz, it was *I* who began to doze."

Not so long after, we learned that Gunboat had become very jealous and had sworn on a barrel of Black Horse Ale to remove Grandpa from competition, if not from the very face of the earth.

When I mentioned the matter to Grandpa, his hundred-odd pounds quivered slightly, but his face remained calm.

"Men have died," he quoted mysteriously, "and the worms have eaten them. But not for love."

Gunboat, however, apparently realized that he would have no thanks from Mme. LaChance if he broke Grandpa's brittle bones. Gunboat's approach was subtle. He caused to appear at our house one day a belle whom Grandpa had once courted briefly. This belle claimed loudly that Grandpa had promised, in legible writing, to marry her.

Grandpa, whose memory was poor and whose imagination, when penning *billets-doux*, was excellent, did not deny the charges. Instead, he served Mlle. Finklewort a fine champagne, showed her his collection of military buttons and his ribbon of the French Legion of Honour.

He inquired if Mlle. Finklewort had ever considered displaying her radiant beauty to a larger public than her circle of friends, by appearing on the stage. He kept referring to her, casually, as "Comtesse," as though confusing her with some highborn lovely.

In the end, the object of her visit completely forgotten, Mlle. Finklewort bade Grandpa *au 'voir* as he kissed her hand, his back creaking audibly.

Gunboat did not relent. In a few weeks Grandpa found himself gaily defending his reputation in the District Court.

A gaudy young thing, on whom, Grandpa insisted, he had never set eyes, was the plaintiff. Grandpa enjoyed himself thoroughly, proving to the judge that the charming young lady in question was the mother of two children of doubtful origin and that she had been twice arrested and convicted: once for stealing chickens from a neighbour and once for lifting pies from a baker's rig.

In the end, Grandpa emerged victorious, his photograph appearing eventually in the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Le Droit*.

Gunboat, in his frustration, now became psychologically morbid. In what was intended to be a war of nerves, he began mailing Grandfather weird and frightening objects.

The gifts included a dead mouse, a live owl (Gunboat's mother, bewitched, Grandpa said), the shrunken skull of a cannibal, and a number of other choice relics. Grandpa was merely amused. He had owned a life-size skeleton for years.

He began to receive telephone calls from a gypsy with a wavering, gloomy voice and a cockney accent who predicted dire happenings to Grandpa if he did not leave the province immediately.

Up to a point, Grandpa thought all this rather entertaining. But he was, after all, a man of taste and refinement. He was not used to long-drawn-out adventures. His true delight was in the crisp, the incisive, the subtle, and the spontaneous. "To tell the truth," he explained one night, "I am become bored with this rhinoceros. Were Mme. LaChance not so lovely I might give her up for some less difficult beauty. Unfortunately, I am terribly attached to the Widow. Also, I have not *met* any other beauty lately. There seems, then, nothing to do but eliminate M. Gunboat!"

"A duel, eh?" Papa said.

"Champagne corks at ten paces," Desmonde suggested.

"A champagne cork," Felix said, "will not travel ten paces with any effect."

"I have my own methods," Grandpa said darkly.

"I hope you'll be careful not to hurt anybody," *Maman* said.

"Not myself, anyway," cackled Grandpa.

Now, Gunboat was a man of strict habits, Grandpa had discovered. He knew Gunboat always came to Mme. LaChance's by the same route through a dark wood in Ottawa East, and at the same hour. Grandpa planned to trap Gunboat—literally.

He took me into conference, without appointment, one day, making me draw a cross with the blood pricked from my thumb and swear not to tell a soul the things which were to be revealed.

I swore and became an accomplice.

Together we journeyed to Ottawa East shortly afterwards and constructed a beartrap. It was, of course, really a mantrap.

We dug a pit, as I had learned from books on hunting big game—a very, very deep pit. Its final triumph was a firm mesh of heavy wire, followed by enormous iron bars, both of which we had carried to the scene in a borrowed truck.

The entire weight of the bars and the wire came down after the trap had closed and made escape impossible without aid.

Fortunately, Grandfather had sense enough to place food and water in the pit. He intended, he explained, to leave Gunboat in the trap for a few days until he was sufficiently frightened never to bother the Widow again. Then the rival was to be released.

We waited in the darkness beside the trap.

" Does this hurt your conscience ? ". Grandpa whispered.

" Not if it works," I replied solemnly.

It was pitch dark when we thought we observed Gunboat. Unfortunately, as it proved later, we were so eager to spring the trap and watch our masterpiece work that we did not have our wits sharpened to their keenest points.

But spring the trap we did. Then we drove the truck hastily back to Ottawa to establish an alibi.

It was three days later that Grandfather, rather jumpy, telephoned the police in a high falsetto voice, squeaking that the brewer's missing man could be found in the woods in Ottawa East.

Grandfather, of course, had been too nervous to go near the Widow during Gunboat's absence. It was just as well. He would not have found the Widow at home.

She was down in the pit with Gunboat.

A month later it was announced that the Widow LaChance and Gunboat were to be married. When we told the news to Grandfather he was philosophic. He twirled the waxed ends of his moustache and said : " After all, when a man and woman spend four days together in a cave—four days and four *nights*—without a chaperon, there is nothing much they *can* do but get married."

He reached for one of his brandy chocolates and bit into it.

" You know, of course," he observed casually, " that she wore a wig ? "

* * *

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SONG WITHOUT WORDS

Brother Michael liked to find the moral in things — and the moral in this was as plain as a pikestaff

by FRANK O'CONNOR

EVEN if there were only two men left in the world and both of them saints, they wouldn't be happy even then. One of them would be bound to try and improve the other. That is the nature of things.

There were two men one time in the big monastery near our place, called Brother Arnold and Brother Michael. In private life Brother Arnold was a postman, but as he had a great name as a cattle doctor they put him in charge of the monastery cows. He had the sort of face you'd expect to see advertising somebody's tobacco; a big, innocent, good-humoured face with a pair of blue eyes that always had a twinkle in them. Of course, by the rule he was supposed to look sedate and go round in a composed and measured way, but wherever Brother Arnold went his eyes went along with him, to see what devilment would he see on the way, and the eyes would give a twinkle and the hands would slip out of the long white sleeves and he'd be beckoning and doing sign talk on his fingers till further orders.

Now, one day it happened that he was looking for a bottle of castor oil and he suddenly remembered that he'd lent it to Brother Michael in the stables. Brother Michael was a fellow he didn't get on too well with at all; a dour, silent sort of man that kept himself to himself. He was a man of no great appearance, with a mournful, wizened little face and a pair of weak, red-rimmed eyes—for all the world the sort of man that, if you shaved off his beard, clapped a bowler hat on his head and a fag in his mouth, wouldn't need any other reference to get a job in a stable.

There wasn't any sign of him around the stable yard, but that was only natural because he wouldn't be wanted till the other monks came back from the fields, so Brother Arnold banged in the stable door and went to look for the bottle himself. He didn't see the bottle, but he saw something else he'd rather not have seen, and that was Brother Michael, hiding in one of the horse-boxes. He was standing against the partition, hoping he wouldn't be noticed, with something hidden behind his back and the look of

a little boy that's just been caught with the jam pot. Something told Brother Arnold he was the most unwelcome man in the world at that minute. He got red and waved his hand by way of showing that he hadn't seen anything and that if he had it was none of his business, and away with him out and back to his own quarters.

It came as a bit of a shock to him. You could see plain enough that the other man was up to something nasty and you could hardly help wondering what it was. It was funny; he always noticed the same thing when he was in the world; it was the quiet, sneaky fellows that were always up to mischief.

In chapel he looked at Brother Michael and he got the impression that Brother Michael was also looking at him; a sneaky sort of look to make sure he wouldn't be spotted. Next day again when they met in the yard he caught Brother Michael looking at him, and he gave him back a cold look and nod as much as to say he had him taped.

The day after, Brother Michael beckoned him to come over to the stable for a minute, as if there was one of the horses sick. Brother Arnold knew well it wasn't one of the horses, but he went all the same. He was curious to know what explanation he would be offered. Brother Michael closed the door carefully after him and then leaned back against the jamb of the door with his legs crossed and his hands behind his back, a real foxy look. Then he nodded in the direction of the horse-box as much as to say, "Remember the day you saw me in there?" Brother Arnold nodded. He wasn't likely to forget it.

So then Brother Michael put his hand up his sleeve and held out a folded newspaper. Brother Arnold grinned as much as to say, "Are you letting on now that that was all you were up to, reading a paper?" but the other man pressed it into his hands. He opened it without any great curiosity, thinking it might be some local paper the man got for the news from home. He glanced at the name of it, and then a light broke on him. His whole face lit up as if you'd switched an electric torch on behind, and at last he burst out laughing. He couldn't help himself. Brother Michael didn't laugh, but he gave a dry little cackle which was as near as he ever got to a laugh.

The name of the paper was *The Irish Racing News.* Brother Michael pointed to a heading about the Curragh and then pointed at himself. Brother Arnold shook his head and gave him another look as if he was waiting for another good laugh out of him. Brother Michael scratched his head for something to show what he meant. He was never much good at the sign language. Then he picked up the sweeping brush and straddled it. He pulled up his skirts; he stretched his left hand out, holding the handle of

the brush and began flogging the air behind him, with a grim look on his leathery little puss. And then Brother Arnold nodded and nodded and put up his thumbs to show he understood.

He saw now that the reason Brother Michael behaved so queerly was because he read racing papers on the sly, and he read racing papers on the sly because in private life he was a jockey on the Curragh.

He was still laughing away like mad, with his blue eyes dancing, and then he remembered all the things he thought about Brother Michael, and bowed his head and beat his breast by way of asking pardon. After that he took another look at the paper. A mischievous twinkle came into his eyes and he pointed the paper at himself. Brother Michael pointed back at him, a bit puzzled. Brother Arnold chuckled and nodded and stuffed the paper up his own sleeve. Then Brother Michael winked and gave the thumbs-up sign, and in that slow cautious way of his he went down the stable and reached up to the top of the wall where the stable roof sloped down. That was his hiding hole. He took down several more and gave them to Brother Arnold.

For the rest of the day Brother Arnold was in the best of humour. He winked and smiled at everyone round the farm till they were all wondering what the joke was. All that evening and long after he went to his cubicle, he rubbed his hands and giggled with delight every time he thought of it; it gave him a warm, mellow feeling, as if his heart had expanded to embrace all humanity.

It wasn't till next morning that he had a chance of looking at the papers himself. He took them out and spread them on a rough desk under a feeble electric light bulb high up in the roof. It was four years since last he'd seen a paper of any sort, and then it was only a bit of a local newspaper that one of the carters had wrapped about a bit of bread and butter. Brother Arnold had palmed it as neatly as any conjurer; hidden it away in his desk and studied it as if it was a bit of a lost Greek play. There was nothing on it but a bit of a County Council wrangle about the appointment of seven warble-fly inspectors, but by the time he was finished with it he knew it by heart. So he didn't just glance at the papers the way a man would in the train to pass the time. He nearly ate them.

Blessed bits of words like fragments of tunes coming to him out of a past life; paddocks and point-to-points and two-year-olds; and there he was in the middle of a racecourse crowd on a spring day, with silver streamers of light floating down the sky like heavenly bunting. He was a handsome fellow in those days. He had only to close his eyes and he could see the refreshment tent again, with the golden light leaking like spilt honey through the rents in the

canvas, and there was the little girl he used to be sparking, sitting on an upturned lemonade box.

"Ah, Paddy," she had said, "sure there's bound to be racing in Heaven!" She was fast; too fast for Brother Arnold, who was a quiet-going sort of fellow, and he never got over the shock when he found out that she was running another fellow all the time. But now, all he could remember of her was her smile, and afterwards, whenever his eyes met Brother Michael's he longed to give him a hearty slap on the back and say, "Michael, there's bound to be racing in Heaven," and then a grin spread over his big sunny face, and Brother Michael, without once losing that casual, melancholy air, replied with a wall-faced flicker of the horny eyelid; a tick-tack man's signal; a real expressionless, horsey look of complete understanding.

One day Brother Michael came in and took out a couple of papers. On one of them he pointed to the horses he'd marked; on the other to the horses that came up. He didn't show any sign of jubilation. He just winked, a leathery sort of a wink, and Brother Arnold gaped as he saw the list of winners. It filled him with wonder to think that where so many clever people lost, a simple little monk, living hundreds of miles away, could foresee it all. The more he thought of it, the more excited he got.

He went to the door, reached up his long arm and took down a loose stone from the wall above it. Brother Michael nodded slowly three or four times, as much as to say, "Well, you're a caution!" Brother Arnold grinned broadly. He might have been saying, "That's nothing." Then he took down a bottle and handed it to Brother Michael.

The jockey gave him one look; his face didn't change, but he took out the cork and sniffed. Still his face never changed. Then all at once he went to the door, gave a quick glance up and a quick glance down and raised the bottle to his mouth. The beer was strong; it made him redden and cough. He cleaned the neck of the bottle with his sleeve before he gave it back. A shudder went through him and his little eyes watered as he watched Brother Arnold's throttle moving on well-oiled hinges. The big man put the bottle back in its hiding-place and beckoned to Brother Michael that he could go there himself whenever he liked. Brother Michael shook his head, but Brother Arnold nodded earnestly. His fingers moved like lightning while he explained how a farmer whose cow he had cured left a bottle in the yard for him every week.

Now, Brother Michael's success made Brother Arnold want to try his hand, and whenever Brother Michael gave him a copy of a racing paper with his own selections marked, Brother Arnold

gave it back with his, and then they contented themselves as well as they could till the results turned up, three or four days late. It was a new lease of life to the little jockey, for what comfort is it to a man even if he has all the winners when there isn't a soul in the whole world he can tell ? He felt now if only he could have a bob each way on a horse, he'd never ask any more of life. Unfortunately, he hadn't a bob. That put Brother Arnold thinking.

He was a resourceful chap, and it was he who invented the dockets, valued for so many Hail Marys. The man who lost had to pay up in prayers for the other man's intention. It was an ingenious scheme and it worked admirably.

At first Brother Arnold had a run of luck. But it wasn't for nothing that the other man had been a jockey. He was too hardy to make a fool of himself, even over a few Hail Marys, and everything he did was carefully planned. Brother Arnold began carefully enough, but the moment he struck it lucky he began to gamble wildly. Brother Michael had often seen it happen on the Curragh, and he remembered the fate of the men it happened to. Fellows he'd known with big houses and cars were now cadging drinks on the streets of Dublin.

" Aha, my lad," he said to himself, thinking of his companion, " God was very good to you the day he called you in here where you couldn't do harm to yourself or those who belonged to you."

Which, by the way, was quite uncalled for, because in the world Brother Arnold's only weakness was for a drop of stout, and it never did him any harm, but Brother Michael was rather given to a distrust of human nature ; the sort of man who goes looking for a moral in everything, even when there's no moral in it. He tried to make Brother Arnold take a proper interest in the scientific side of betting, but the man seemed to take it all as a great joke, a flighty sort of fellow. He bet more and more wildly, with that foolish good-natured grin on his face, and after a while Brother Michael found himself being owed the deuce of a lot of prayers.

He didn't like that either. It gave him scruples of conscience and finally turned him against betting in any shape or form. He tried to get Brother Arnold to drop it, but Brother Arnold only looked hurt and a little indignant, like a child you've told to stop his game. Brother Michael had that weakness on his conscience too. It suggested that he was getting too attached to Brother Arnold, as in fact he was. He had to admit it. There was something warm and friendly about the man that you couldn't help liking.

Then one day he went in to Brother Arnold and found him with a pack of cards in his hand. They were a very old pack that had more than served their time in some farmer's house. They gave

Brother Michael a turn, just to look at them. Brother Arnold made the gesture of dealing them out, and Brother Michael shook his head. Brother Arnold blushed and bit his lip, but he persisted. All the doubts Brother Michael had been having for weeks turned to conviction. This was the primrose path with a vengeance; one thing leading to another.

Brother Arnold grinned and shuffled the deck; Brother Michael, biding his time, cut for deal and Brother Arnold won. He dealt two hands of five and showed the five of hearts as trump. Just because he was still waiting for a sign, Brother Michael examined his own hand. His face got grimmer. It wasn't the sort of sign he had been expecting, but it was a sign all the same: four hearts all in a bunch; the ace, the jack, two other trumps and the three of spades. All he had to do was surrender the spade and pick up the five of trumps, and there he was with an unbeatable hand. Was that luck? Was that coincidence, or was it the Old Boy himself, taking a hand and trying to draw him deeper down into the mud?

He liked to find the moral in things, and the moral in this was as plain as a pikestaff, though it went to his heart to admit it. He was a lonesome, melancholy little man and the horses had meant a lot to him in his bad spells. At times it seemed as if they were the only thing that kept him from going clean dotty. How was he going to face maybe twenty or thirty years more of life, never knowing what horses were running or what jocks were up—Derby Day, Punchestown, Leopardstown and the Curragh, all going by and he knowing no more of them than if he was dead?

"O Lord," he thought bitterly, "a fellow gives up the whole world for You, his chance of a wife and kids, his home and his family, his friends and his job, and goes off to a bare mountain where he can't even tell his troubles to the man alongside him; and still he keeps something back. One little thing to remind him of what he gave up. With me 'twas the horses and with this man 'twas the sup of beer; and I daresay there's fellows inside that have a bit of girl's hair hidden somewhere they can go and look at it now and again. I suppose we all have our little hiding hole, if the truth was known, but as small as it is, the whole world is in it, and bit by bit it grows on us again till the day You find us out."

Brother Arnold was waiting for him to play. He gave a great sigh and put his hand on the deck. Brother Arnold looked at it and then looked at him. Brother Michael idly took away the spade and added the heart, and still Brother Arnold couldn't see. Then Brother Michael shook his head and pointed down through the floor. Brother Arnold bit his lip again as though he were on the

point of crying, threw down his own hand and walked away to the other end of the cow-house.

Brother Michael left him so for a few moments. He could see the struggle that was going on in the man; he could almost hear the Old Boy whispering in his ear that he, Brother Michael, was only an old woman (Brother Michael had heard that before); that life was long and that a man might as well be dead and buried as not have some little thing to give him an innocent bit of amusement—the sort of plausible whisper that put many a man on the gridiron. He knew that however hard it was now, Brother Arnold would be thankful to him in the next world. "Brother Michael," he'd say, "I don't know what I'd ever have done without the example you gave me."

Then Brother Michael went up and touched him gently on the shoulder. He pointed to the bottle, the racing paper and the cards in turn. Brother Arnold heaved a terrible sigh but he nodded. They gathered them up between them, the cards and the bottle and the papers, hid them under their habits to avoid all occasion of scandal and went off to confess their crimes to the Prior.

* * *

IN BRIEF

Abernethy [the famous surgeon] has become a by-word for rudeness and even brutality of manner; but he was as tender and generous as a man ought to be, as a man of great intelligence usually is.

A lady on one occasion entered his consulting-room and put before him an injured finger, without saying a word. In silence, Abernethy dressed the wound, when instantly and silently the lady put the usual fee on the table, and retired. In a few days she called again, and offered the finger for inspection. "Better?" asked the surgeon. "Better," answered the lady, speaking to him for the first time. Not another word followed during the rest of the interview. Three or four similar visits were made, at the last of which the patient held out her finger free from bandages and perfectly healed. "Well?" was Abernethy's monosyllabic inquiry. "Well," was the lady's equally brief answer. "Upon my soul, madam," exclaimed the delighted surgeon, "you are the most rational woman I ever met with."

J. CORDY JEAFFRESON, 1831-1901

THE OLD STORY

I have been in love, and in debt, and in drink,
This many and many a year

ALEXANDER BROME, 1620–1666, *The Mad Lover*

Ladies who read this, and who know what a love I have for the whole sex, will not, I hope, cry out at the above observations, or be angry because I state that the ardour of love declines after a certain period. My dear Mrs. Hopkins, you would not have Hopkins to carry on the same absurd behaviour which he exhibited when he was courting you? Or in place of going to bed and to sleep comfortably, sitting up half the night to write to you bad verses? You would not have him racked with jealousy if you danced or spoke with anyone else at a ball; or neglect all his friends, his business, his interest in life, in order to dangle at your feet? No, you are a sensible woman; you know that he must go to his counting-house, that he must receive and visit his friends, and that he must attend to his and your interest in life. You are no longer his goddess, his fairy, his peerless paragon, whose name he shouted as Don Quixote did that of Dulcinea. You are Jane Hopkins, you are thirty years old, you have got a parcel of children, and Hop loves you and them with all his heart. He would be a helpless driveller and ninny were he to be honeymooning still, whereas he is a good honest fellow, respected on 'Change, liked by his friends, and famous for his port-wine.

W. M. THACKERAY, 1811-1863, *Sketches and Travels in London*

Easily Downhearted!

I took your advice; and some time ago took to love and made some advances to the lady you sent me to in Soho, but met no return; so I have given up all thoughts of it, and have now no pursuit or amusement.

JOHN GAY *to Dean Swift, 4th July*, 1730

In Modern Dress

"Every bit of twenty pounds," was Robert's verdict (on the weight of the pike she had just caught).

"What a thrill!" said Cynthia.

"Yes," he said, and added in a hesitating sort of way, "Talking

of thrills—" He broke off and appeared confused. Then he made a sudden dash at it.

" Would it be utterly childish," he said, " if I asked you to marry me ? "

Thus, in these days, are momentous questions put.

" No," she said, " it wouldn't."

Whether our elders like it or not, that is how things are done.

" Do you mean," he asked, " that it is the kind of idea you can bear ? "

" Yes, Bob, darling. I can bear it ! "

Romance in a nutshell. What one's grandfather would have said . . . but who cares what one's grandfather would have said. Everything is in a nutshell nowadays. It has one virtue at least—it saves time.

J. H. TURNER, *Why They Lied to Each Other*

The Right Approach

I gave her cakes : I gave her ale,
I gave her sack and sherry ;
I kissed her once, I kissed her twice,
And we were wondrous merry.

I gave her beads and bracelets fine,
And I gave her gold down derry ;
I thought she was afeard till she stroked my beard,
And we were wondrous merry.

Merry my heart, merry my cocks, merry my sprights,
Merry my hey down derry ;
I kissed her once and I kissed her twice,
And we were wondrous merry.

Author Unknown

The Test

But what were the feelings of Theobald and Christina when the village was passed and they were rolling quietly by the fir plantation ? It is at this point that even the stoutest heart must fail, unless it beat in the breast of one who is over head and heels in love. If a young man is in a small boat on a choppy sea, along with his affianced bride and both are seasick, and if the sick swain can forget his own anguish in the happiness of holding the fair one's head when she is at her worst—then he is in love, and his heart will be in no danger of failing him as he passes his fir plantation.

SAMUEL BUTLER, 1835-1902, *The Way of All Flesh*

Prevention's No Cure

Wee have had a young lady sent from Burleigh to a countrey parson's, at a place called Spennythorn, to prevent her marrying a footman there; this has been effectually provided against, for yesterday was a sennight she ran away with a recruiting captain, and though pursued and overtaken at York, gott maryed to him last Wednesday.

ROGER GALE, *in a letter*, 1742

Never Say Die

" Oh, 'tis time I should talk to your mother,
Sweet Mary," says I ;
" Oh, don't talk to my mother," says Mary,
Beginning to cry :
" For my mother says men are deceivers,
And never, I know, will consent ;
She says girls in a hurry who marry,
At leisure repent."

" Then suppose I would talk to your father,
Sweet Mary," says I ;
" Oh, don't talk to my father," says Mary,
Beginning to cry :
" For my father, he loves me so dearly,
He'll never consent I should go—
If you talk to my father," says Mary,
" He'll surely say 'No'."

" Then how shall I get you, my jewel?
Sweet Mary," says I ;
" If your father and mother's so cruel,
Most surely I'll die ! "
" Oh, never say die, dear," says Mary ;
" A way now to save you I see :
Since my parents are both so contrary—
You'd better ask me."

SAMUEL LOVER, 1797-1868

Contrary Motion

Women themselves have declared that one of their sex is never so much inclined to throw in her lot with a man for good and all as five minutes after she had told him such a thing cannot be.

THOMAS HARDY, 1840-1928

SPUR OF DECISION

**Love thy brother, Rorju had been taught,
but this man was brother to no one**

by H. G. EVARTS

THE storm, the first big storm of November, had been piling up since daybreak, and now at noon clouds hung low and threatening over the peaks. Rorju Lasang cast one more glance up the bare, rocky slope and with a sigh of regret slung the rifle across his back. The wind, swooping over the pass of Ngatei La, bit through his stingy flesh into the stiff old bones, and he turned reluctantly down towards the valley.

In another few hours surely he would have flushed a herd of the blue sheep whose meat is so highly prized along the Chinese-Tibetan frontier. One sheep would have served his purpose. But Rorju had stretched his luck to the limit already, and now he must take cover until the storm blew itself out.

A younger and stronger man, he told himself, a keener hunter, might have succeeded. All the village had counted on him to return over the pass with a carcass or two, from which a feast was to be prepared for the birthday of Father Mahoney. Twenty-five winters ago the Father had founded Namtok Mission, and this was to be a special feast, a feast he would remember for as long as he lived to teach and heal the mountain people. To Rorju Lasang this honour had fallen, and the thought of failure filled him with shame.

Stooped against the wind, he picked his way down off the ridge as the first snow flurries beat against him—a tall, lean man, deliberate of movement, with a mouth puckered tight over toothless gums and a dark, stolid face that betrayed no anxiety. He knew these mountains, knew their weather, and he was equipped to wait out any storm. But at moments like this it was hard to follow the precepts of Father Mahoney, to accept his faith that all worked out for the best.

Through the scudding flakes he made out the deserted stone-cutter's hut beside the fork in the trail, where he had slept the night before. Then he caught an acrid whiff of dung smoke, a smell that brought him up short. Too late to retreat, he saw three pack horses huddled in the building's lee, and a soldier regarding him open-mouthed. The soldier shouted and motioned with his rifle.

Rorju raised one hand in the sign of peace, his eyes wide. Soldiers, Chinese soldiers, seldom came to the high country, and never before had he seen one at this time of year, when the passes would soon be blocked and trails choked with drifts. Soldiers meant trouble at any time and he had blundered into their midst like a brainless yak.

Three more Chinese burst through the doorway, followed by a tall, fair-skinned man in fur parka and foreign uniform. A foreigner but a white man—and therefore friendly. Concealing his surprise, Rorju advanced towards the hut, somewhat reassured.

"*Uji*," he said in Tibetan, and then stuck out his tongue. "Greetings."

The foreigner frowned, as though he did not understand. He was young, Rorju saw, young enough to be his son, but his face held the severe, set look of a much older man; a broad, flat face with high, slanting cheekbones and cold grey eyes. There was a pistol holster belted about his waist, and he carried his size with an air of self-conscious authority. In the Szechwan dialect he said, "Do you speak Chinese, old man? Is that rifle yours?"

Rorju nodded.

"I am Lieutenant Roskov, on special duty from military headquarters in Kanting."

Puzzled, Rorju said, "God smile upon your trail. And I am Rorju Lasang, hunter for the village of Namtok."

"Namtok?" One corner of the foreigner's mouth lifted. "And the priest, the white man, he is there now?"

Warily Rorju inspected the ring of shivering soldiers. They wore, not the grey of provincial troops, but brown, some thin, shoddy stuff, and red-starred insignia he did not recognize. He had heard rumours about the fighting in the plains below, some change of government which did not concern him. But this lieutenant had a brusqueness, a lack of manners that displeased him.

"The *Ge-she* is always there," he said. "It is his home."

"*Ge-she?*" The lieutenant's tone was demanding.

Rorju's brows wrinkled. It was difficult to explain that day so long ago when Father Mahoney had first arrived in the village with his boxes of books and medical supplies. He had been young then, as Rorju himself had been, a strange-looking sight in his long, black robe, with bright red hair and laughing blue eyes. He had called the people together to explain his work, and someone had asked how they were to call him.

"Why," the Father had said with a smile, "my name is Richard Thomas Joseph Patrick Henry Mahoney, which is a mouthful for any man. So, if it please you, call me the Padre."

" Padre " was an untranslatable word in the Hsikang tongue, so they had called him *Ge-she* instead. His red hair had long since turned to grey and his shoulders were bent, but his eyes had never lost their twinkle, and he still made his rounds of the sick and poor.

Staring at the lieutenant now, Rorju said, " Man of Learning, Man of God, that is how he is known through all the mountains."

" Man of God, eh ? " The lieutenant made a sign, and two Chinese stepped forward.

Roughly they jerked the rifle from Rorju's back, stripped off his powder horn and knife and tinder kit.

" Only soldiers of the People's Army may carry guns," the lieutenant said. " It is a crime punishable by death."

Rorju swallowed dryly, watching the young man's fingers dip into the leather bag that held his tinder kit. The foreigner drew out the flint and steel, a handful of moss, and then, grinning widely, a full set of gleaming pink and white false teeth. He held them up, his lips pursed in mock alarm, and clicked them together. The Chinese laughed.

Rorju, his cheeks a furious red, held out his hand.

" And where did you get these, old man ? Rob some corpse ? "

Rorju braced himself against the wind, anger hot and thick in his throat. He did not understand why this man was here nor what he wanted, but about the teeth Rorju was sure. They had been a gift from Father Mahoney, only the week before, sent all the way from Shanghai, to the wonder and delight of Namtok village. No other man in the mountains had such teeth, and no man could take them from him.

" They are mine," he said.

The lieutenant shrugged and dropped them into Rorju's palm. He snapped a command, and one of the Chinese jumped to untie the ropes of the horses. The others shouldered their rifles and packs, straggling into line before the hut. The lieutenant crossed to the trailside cairn, thumbs hooked in his pistol belt, peering up towards the distant saddle of Ngatei La. He waved Rorju forward.

" According to my map, the Namtok trail forks here, up across the pass."

Rorju stared incredulously. " You would travel in such a storm ? There is no shelter nor fuel for the next hundred *li*."

" We carry our own," the foreigner said. " How long will it take us to reach the summit ? "

Rorju looked round at the Chinese again. A man could cross Ngatei La at any time of year, provided he knew the way and knew

his strength. But it was not a trail for these low-country soldiers in their rubber shoes and threadbare clothes. " A day, perhaps, in fair weather, but now—"

" I asked you a question. How long to the summit ? "

Rorju hesitated. Their route was none of his affair. His problem was to recover his rifle. Without it he could not hunt, could not shoot a sheep for the birthday feast of Father Mahoney. But he was a Christian, and his Christian duty was to warn this man.

" Only God can say. You will be wise to stay here until the storm passes. It is very cold up above."

The lieutenant smiled. " Where I come from we are used to cold. Now, fall in behind me."

Rorju started to protest, then took his place. He had no choice, really, none at all. And perhaps they might return his rifle, once they saw how badly he needed it. If not, Father Mahoney would intercede for him ; all men respected the word of the Father.

Stamping the snow away from his boots, Rorju set out behind the lieutenant, followed by the four Chinese and their pack animals.

The trail was steep and poorly marked. The storm thickened rapidly, sweeping down over the pass, obscuring landmarks, and the hut fell away below in grey, swirling mist. They climbed on at the lieutenant's steady, punishing gait. Sweat poured down inside Rorju's woollens, and he heard the tortured breathing of the nearest Chinese behind him, the wheezing of the horses.

Presently they dropped into a ravine, where new snow had already formed over last year's snow, which never melted off at this altitude. The lieutenant plunged straight ahead. Stepping gingerly in his tracks, Rorju saw him break through the undercrust and spill headlong. He bounded up and brushed the snow from his face, scowling at Rorju.

" You are sure this is the trail ? " he asked.

" This is the trail," Rorju said. " But the drifts will be too deep for horses. Men, yes, but not horses."

The lieutenant abruptly turned away. Silently Rorju followed. He could not imagine what purpose drove this foreigner on against the storm, against all logic, when he might be warm and safe in the hut below. He was like a man obsessed by some devil, a man afraid.

Hour after hour they pushed forward, floundering from one swiftly growing drift to the next, taking their bearings from an occasional pile of stones that showed its tip above the snow. In places the snow was hip-deep, soft and powdery, but gradually it packed down into a stubborn, clinging mass. Several times they

had to tramp out a path for the horses, and finally, at the base of a long, steep rise, the leading animal went down with wildly thrashing legs.

The lieutenant stalked back to the rear of the column. Rorju listened impassively while he argued with the Chinese soldiers, and presently one of them pulled the trembling horse up on to its feet, turned all three animals about, and led them off slowly down the ravine, the way they had come.

The lieutenant's eyes were grim when he swung back to Rorju. " We carry rations enough in our packs. The horses only slow us down."

He spoke almost defiantly, as though to justify his decision, and Rorju stared at him in wonder.

" You had better turn back with the horses and the rest of your men," Rorju said. " Ngatei La will be open for travel again by spring."

The lieutenant made a gesture of impatience. " How much farther to the pass ? "

" A long way," Rorju said. " A very long way."

The storm was still driving with unabated fury when they halted for the night. The lieutenant chose a spot between two boulders which afforded some slight protection, and the three Chinese slumped down beside Rorju, their faces pinched and blue. Only the lieutenant seemed fresh and untired as he briskly set up camp. He lit a portable paraffin stove, set a panful of snow on to melt, and spread his blanket.

" You will be under guard tonight," he told Rorju. " Do not try to slip away."

Rorju lowered his eyes. He had no intention of slipping away. He found himself liking this foreigner less and less, but the words of Father Mahoney were firm in his mind. Love thy brother, the Father taught, and all men were brothers to Father Mahoney. This foreigner would not heed his advice, but most certainly he would need help to reach the crest of Ngatei La.

" This priest ? " the lieutenant said. " You know him well ? "

" Know him ? " Rorju asked. " He is my friend."

" You are a simple one, old man," the lieutenant said. " This friendly priest of yours is a foreign agent, a spy, an enemy of the New China."

" You speak of someone else," Rorju said. " Father Mahoney has not an enemy in this world, nor the next."

" Mahoney—that is his name ? A dangerous, evil man. He should have been arrested long ago."

" But you ? Are you not a white man, too ? "

The lieutenant smiled. " Now, that is a foolish question—"

Yes, Rorju thought, a foolish question from a foolish old man. The foreigner's talk confused him. In silence he drew a strip of dried goat flesh from the bag on his belt, slipped the teeth into his mouth and began to chew. They were still new and strange and hurt his gums, so he wore them only to eat.

"Here, old friend," Father Mahoney had said, the day he presented the teeth to Rorju. "Here is something to replace what you have lost. You cannot keep strong on tea and gruel. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, but a hunter of meat must eat meat, himself."

So Rorju had accepted the gift, his heart full and tears brimming in his eyes, vowing that some day he would repay the goodness of Father Mahoney. As he watched the lieutenant now, he could not believe there was evil in the Father's heart, Father Mahoney, who truly loved all men. There must be some mistake.

He said, "You have seen him?"

"I have seen his record," the lieutenant said. "I have orders to march him back to Kanting."

"But he cannot leave the mission."

The lieutenant shrugged. "The mission will be closed."

Rorju rubbed a hand over his eyes, and a chill that was not of the storm struck at him. Close the mission? March the Father away? And yet why should the foreigner lie to him? What other reason could bring soldiers into the high country now? They must consider the Father important, indeed, to come so far.

A new anger stirred in Rorju's heart, as deep and hateful as it was surprising, for he had supposed himself long past such intensity of feeling. The Father belonged to Namtok village, to all the mountain people; that much a foolish old man understood. Glancing up at the Chinese who sat guarding him, rifle across one knee, Rorju compressed his lips. The Chinese was eating snow, letting it melt inside his mouth and trickle down his throat.

Rorju Lasang had said enough. They would not listen to him, these barbarians from the plains, so let them learn. The mountains were the best of teachers; perhaps the mountains would teach them some brotherhood, if nothing else. He closed his eyes and leaned back against the rock, stuffing his toes deep into his fleece-lined boots.

It was still a long way to the summit of Ngatei La . . .

He woke to the dawn's dead, bitter cold, cramped and stiff. He rubbed the sleep from his eyes, and carefully massaged his feet. The lieutenant was already astir, swinging his arms and breathing out clouds of steam into the thin, still air. The wind had died during the night and flakes fell only intermittently, but the camp was covered deep.

" The worst of the storm has passed," the lieutenant said. " It may clear before noon."

Rorju grunted.

Two of the Chinese were folding their packs, but the third lay on his blanket, knees doubled up to his chin. The lieutenant shouted and prodded him with a boot. The soldier groaned and rolled over and retched into the snow. The lieutenant jerked him to his feet, but the Chinese stumbled and fell, twitching with spasms.

" Mountain sickness," Rorju said. " He has stuffed his belly with snow."

The lieutenant swore and shook the Chinese by the shoulder. " Listen to me," he said. " Your cramps will pass soon, but we cannot wait. As soon as you can walk, go back down to the hut. We will meet you there on our return."

The Chinese nodded his head feebly. Rorju stared down at the chalky, pain-drawn face and an inner voice he could not still, a voice of compassion, spoke for him.

" He is too weak to walk alone," Rorju said.

" I will give the orders." The lieutenant swung up his pack.

As they moved off up the snow slope, their party now reduced to four, Rorju glanced back at the soldier sprawled between the boulders. Then the softly drifting flakes cut him off from view.

After a long, wicked climb they came out on a narrow, wind-scoured ridge that seemed to drop away into a void on all sides. The lieutenant squinted off uncertainly into the curtain of storm a long time before turning at last to Rorju. In a toneless voice he said, " Take the lead for a while. The trail markers are buried."

Rorju plodded off in front without a word. He was tired already, so early in the day; his blood was too thin and his muscles too knotty and his wind too short; he was getting too old to hunt in the high places. But he must not let this foreigner suspect. He would show him the endurance of a mountain man.

His mind reached back to the teachings of Father Mahoney, as it did so often when he hunted alone, with only the wind and the rock and the sky around him, and he remembered the day his wife had died of the fever. He had been alone with his grief then, inconsolable, when the Father came to him.

" Faith, man," the Father had said. " Faith and courage. A cruel loss, and my heart suffers for you, but know that it is part of the Merciful Lord's design, His all-seeing Purpose. There was a reason, Rorju, believe me, and you will see it, too, one day."

His faith had been weak then, Rorju told himself, but in time he had come to see, to believe, with the Father to show him the path. He was a whole man again. But he wished he had guidance

now. For if the Father was evil, as the lieutenant said, then that which Rorju Lasang had it in his mind to do was evil also. How was he to judge the Lord's design ?

Midday came, and with it a fresh onset of snow. Rorju bowed his head into the storm and fought his way up the next slope, a slope that seemed like all the others they had climbed before, vast and bleak and still. Even the foreigner paused often to rest, sucking air into his lungs with great, heaving gasps, and one Chinese had begun to limp. Each step was a struggle, a test of will that sapped the body and numbed the brain. There was for Rorju only the snow and the wind and the paralyzing cold, pressing in like hungry foes.

In the late afternoon they staggered out on to a bald spur of rock. The storm parted momentarily, revealing a wall of cliffs and towering spires, then closed in once more. Frowning over his map, the lieutenant said, " We have been bearing south, I think. Have you lost the trail ? "

" No," Rorju said. " I have not lost it."

" We must be just below the pass, then. How much farther ? "

Rorju shrugged. " Some distance yet."

For the first time the lieutenant seemed unsure. Doubt faintly clouded his eyes. " You would not be so foolish as to lie to me, old man ? " he said.

Mildly Rorju said, " Not if you do not lie to yourself."

They halted there for the night, too spent to travel farther, huddled behind a snowbank. Rorju chewed on his meat, eyeing the soldier detailed to guard him for the first hours of darkness. He must wait, he cautioned himself, have patience. Tomorrow, perhaps, or the next day. He could not hurry the mountains. His time would come, soon, and he prayed for the strength and wisdom to meet it.

Long before the first murky glint of daybreak they were on the march again, pushing upwards into the endless grey desolation. The Chinese who had developed a limp was constantly falling behind, holding the party back, and finally it happened, just as Rorju had known that it would. The Chinese slipped in a drift and did not get up.

Angrily the lieutenant halted again, while Rorju knelt down beside the Chinese and removed his thin-soled shoe and sock. His toes had turned an ugly fish-belly white and a crescent of frozen flesh curved up his instep. He made another effort to stand, but cried out through clenched teeth and fell back.

Rorju shook his head and looked up at the lieutenant.

" We will have to leave him here," the lieutenant said. " We can send back bearers from Namtok with a litter."

The soldier buried his face in his hands, but did not speak, and Rorju thought, " They are like dogs, these Chinese, with all the manhood whipped out of them ; if the foreigner tells them to die they lie down and die. Their souls are diseased with some strange fear."

Aloud, Rorju said, " He is a man, not a beast."

The lieutenant's mouth tightened. " Speak your meaning."

He was the guide, Rorju thought, but he was the one who needed guidance. He would give the lieutenant this one last chance.

" Your soldier may lose his foot if he is left here overnight," Rorju said. " Perhaps his leg. The three of us can carry him back to the hut."

" And lose another three or four days ? "

" It is better than to lose a life," Rorju said.

" I have my orders, and a soldier does not question his orders. Obedience is something you Tibetans will learn."

Rorju drew a long breath. " May God forgive you. May He forgive us both."

" Never mind your religion," the lieutenant said. " Just take us on to the pass."

So they climbed on, Rorju, the lieutenant, and one Chinese, leaving the other soldier behind. Rorju sighed as he remembered the look of submission in the man's eyes, the empty fatalism. It shocked and puzzled him as much as the foreigner's obsession to cross the pass. All of them needed the grace of Father Mahoney to cure whatever canker it was that gnawed at their hearts. The one man who could help them, they came to arrest.

That much seemed clear to Rorju Lasang, and firmed his resolve.

Some time during the third afternoon the wind slackened and died, but the snow continued to fall with a soft, relentless whisper. At times Rorju could not see twenty paces before him. The land was featureless, a waste of snow and ice that swallowed up their tracks, leaving no human trace. Shortly before nightfall he climbed on to another platform of naked, wind-swept rock to reconnoitre.

A sudden shrieking gust ripped at the mass of storm, and through a rift of cloud he caught a glimpse of one lone peak, dwarfed by distance, and another range of mountains, far, far below.

The lieutenant's gasp was sharp, unbelieving. He whirled, and caught Rorju by the arm. " We must be twenty thousand feet ! " he shouted. " We're far above the pass ! "

Rorju stared unblinking into his eyes. It had come, sooner than he wished, but he was as ready as ever he would be.

Behind him the Chinese let out a wail.

"Let us turn back!" the Chinese cried. "Turn back before we all die."

The lieutenant dropped Rorju's arm and slapped the soldier across the face.

"Enough!"

But the soldier clutched at his sleeve.

"We are lost!" he cried, and it was a bleat of terror. "Our food is almost gone. Unless we go back we will freeze!"

The lieutenant shook him off and brought one hand to the flap of his pistol holster. "Enough, I tell you!"

The soldier backed away, babbling hysterically, his eyes beseeching. "The old man has led us round and round in circles. I refuse to go on. I am going back to join my comrades!"

He wheeled and ran lurching across the snow. The lieutenant shouted again, then drew his pistol and fired. The Chinese pitched on to his face and collapsed, and the lieutenant walked forward and fired twice more into the back of his head. Rorju stood motionless, holding in the nausea that wrenched him. For a long minute the lieutenant stood over the body, his jaw thrust out, then slowly turned back to Rorju.

"Do you, too, refuse?"

Rorju glanced at the pistol and moistened his lips, feeling the panic squeeze up in his chest. The foreigner was beyond appeal, beyond redemption.

"Do not threaten me," he said. "Or you will surely die here, more painfully than your soldier died."

The lieutenant's mouth quirked, but Rorju saw the shadow of fear in his eyes. Fear that he could not find the pass nor find the hut again, with its food and warmth and shelter. Without Rorju to guide him he was hopelessly lost in this storm that might batter the mountains for days or even weeks. Rorju saw all this and waited for the offer he was sure would come.

"What is it you want?" the lieutenant said. "Silver? Your rifle? A permit to hunt? These details can be arranged."

"Nothing," Rorju said. "I want nothing from you."

The lieutenant's eyes narrowed. "All right, old man." He slid the gun back into his holster. "We halt here for the night. But tomorrow we go on, you and I."

Rorju made no answer. He could lead him about in one circle after another, but the lieutenant had youth and strength and the inner hardness of granite. He would outlast Rorju as he had outlasted the Chinese. They were trapped together, one could not escape without the other, but in the end the lieutenant must win, unless Rorju willed them both to lose.

" I do not think you will run," the lieutenant said. " I do not think you are ready to die for a foreign priest."

He motioned Rorju towards a pocket among the rocks. They settled themselves, backs to the storm, while the lieutenant ate the last of his rice, his eyes never shifting from Rorju's face. Rorju forced himself to eat, matching the other's silence, and bitterness grew upon him. He had supposed all white men good, as Father Mahoney was good, but this white man was brother to no one.

The lieutenant wiped his mouth, his face barely discernible in the last dim glow of daylight, and drew a knife from his pocket, while Rorju watched him apprehensively.

" I think you will change your mind," he said, " but all the same I would not like to find you gone in the morning."

He cut a strip of rawhide from a strap of his pack, made a double loop around Rorju's wrists, and knotted it tight. The other end he fastened to his own wrist. " We need our sleep," he said.

Rorju looked at the rawhide and flexed his arm, and the thong drew taut.

" You see," the lieutenant said. " Do not try to reach for my gun. I am a restless sleeper."

He stretched out on his side, pulling Rorju down beside him, and they lay face to face on the snow, inches apart, under the drifting flakes. Rorju, though feeling the deadly pinch of cold, was gripped by a faint, grim hope. There was one thing an old man could do without that a younger man could not—sleep. He had looked upon evil this day, but his doubts and his fears were gone. His lips began to move.

" What do you mumble, old man ? "

" I pray," Rorju said. " I pray for you."

The lieutenant snorted. Presently his breathing deepened and he snored. He stirred once, growling sleepily, when Rorju moved, and tested the knots. Then he buried his face under his parka once more. Rorju held his breath, waiting until the snores resumed.

Hours later Rorju cautiously raised his head and pushed himself to his knees, trembling with exhaustion. His head throbbed and his body ached with the effort of holding rigid. The lieutenant muttered and flung out an arm. Rorju shrank back, his heart pounding, until the lieutenant quieted. For a moment he stared down at the sleeping form, rubbed his wrists, then crawled away.

Some distance back among the rocks he got to his feet unsteadily and let the stinging wind blow some of the fog from his brain. It was a long way yet to Ngatei La, and farther still to the village, but it would be simple to walk away now in the blackness of the night. He thought of the three Chinese abandoned along the trail, and he

thought of Father Mahoney, and impulsively he packed a snowball and threw it back at the invisible camp. He did not want this to be too simple.

Cupping one hand behind his ear, Rorju listened intently. He heard a muffled grunt and then a yell of surprise. The lieutenant's voice was shrill against the storm. " Wait ! " he shouted. " Wait ! Come back ! Don't leave me, old man ! "

Rorju waited, and the voice in the dark grew threatening, outraged, profane. There was a shot, a sharp, whining crack that lost itself in the storm, followed by several more, as though the lieutenant were searching the night for a target he knew he could not find.

Only then did Rorju turn away. Behind him the voice faded to a thin, futile wail. He did not think this foreigner would come to Namtok to march the Father away, and perhaps no others would. He could not speak of this, ever, because Father Mahoney would surely disapprove, but the conscience of Rorju Lasang was clear.

Gently he removed the teeth from his raw, sore mouth. He had lost his rifle, failed to return with meat for the feast, he was an old and foolish man, but not yet too old to chew through rawhide thongs.

Sometimes the design of God worked in wondrous ways. Truly he owed much to his great, good friend, his brother, the *Ge-she*, and some day he would find a way to repay him.

Soundlessly Rorju moved off into the storm.

* * *

THE OLD ORIGINAL

Richard Watson (1737-1816), Bishop of Llandaff, used to be a frequent and welcome visitor to " The Cock," an inn on Windermere.

The Landlord, to do the Bishop honour, renamed his hostel and changed its sign to " The Bishop of Llandaff," with the Bishop's portrait below. Then an opposition innkeeper, to take advantage of the other, changed the sign of his inn to " The Cock " ; whereon the landlord of " The Bishop of Llandaff " added below the portrait on his sign, *This is the old Cock.*

RICHARD B. PILCHER, in a letter to *The Sunday Time*

TIME WON'T WAIT

Each second was driving his dream, his miracle, farther out of reach

by LORENZO SEMPLE

WHEN the office clock said five minutes to five, Arthur began tidying his desk just as though today were like any other day. But the pretence was only for other people, for in his heart Arthur knew that today was in no way like other days. All day long the sound of typewriters had beaten out one name to his ears—*Mary*. The soft rustle of paper had whispered " Mary," the noise of traffic had sung her thousand beauties. Today had been a dream in slow motion, and even now, with the moment nearly at hand, Arthur couldn't quite believe that such incredible fortune was really his.

Each time he remembered how they'd met, Arthur was more struck by the miracle of it. He'd been walking along the beach when a big striped ball rolled to a stop at his feet. He looked round and saw the picnickers. Before he knew it, somebody had waved at him to come along and join in. Then he was suddenly part of the group, and then there was Mary. They'd seen each other right away, and for one instant—only one—their hands had touched.

That moment had been enough.

" I have to see you again," Arthur had said in a not-quite-steady voice, when it was time for her to go.

" Yes," Mary nodded. " When ? "

" Monday at five-ten," Arthur answered.

" And where ? " Mary asked, rather breathlessly.

" North-east corner of Park Square," Arthur said.

" Yes. Fine," Mary nodded again.

They hadn't said anything more than that, but it had been enough. Even afterwards, when it occurred to him that he didn't know her last name or where she lived or any of the other things that people usually know, Arthur didn't find that a bit strange ; it was simply another part of the miracle which had hit him.

The hands of the office clock touched five. It seemed monstrous to Arthur that no bells pealed, no trumpets sounded. He closed his desk carefully and stepped outside to the coat rack. In less

than ten minutes he'd be with her, in less than six hundred seconds.

" Why, hello, Arthur," a voice said. " I've been looking for you."

" For me ? " Arthur mumbled. Then he turned and saw Mr. Davidson, the boss. " Oh, it's you, sir," he said vaguely.

" Have a minute ? I'd like to talk with you," Davidson said.

Before Arthur had a chance to find words, Davidson had turned and pushed open the door to his office. It loomed like a yawning, baited trap. Arthur opened his mouth to protest, but no words came out. Dazed, he felt himself sucked in through Davidson's panelled door. Then he was in the big chair, holding a thick sheaf of papers.

" Look over those reports," Davidson said. " Take your time, Arthur. Then let me know what you think of them."

Like an automaton which has no will, Arthur turned the pages. Names and figures swirled crazily before his eyes. He had no idea how long it took him, but it must have been quite a considerable time. There were a lot of pages.

" They're very interesting," Arthur said finally, scarcely recognizing his own voice. " It seems to me that the trouble is with distribution. It's costing us too much in marginal markets."

" You're right," Davidson said. He picked up a sharp paper knife and turned it slowly between his fingers. " We must see that your good work is rewarded," he declared finally.

Then let me go ! Arthur wanted to cry out. He could see only one corner of the onyx-mounted clock on Davidson's desk, but imagination did the rest. He fancied the minute-hand whirring around the dial like the blade of a scythe, mowing down time. The paper knife in Davidson's hand was suddenly a dagger pointed at his heart, and Arthur felt the tiny beads of perspiration break out on his temples.

" That's—that's extremely kind of you, sir. I do appreciate it."

" Of course, I can't promise anything immediate."

" Naturally. I quite understand," Arthur said, and it took all his self-control to avoid laughing. Nothing immediate—when each second, each syllable, was making Mary more remote ! Something very like physical sickness struck Arthur then, for he suddenly knew with absolute certainty that Mary would not wait for him any longer. How could she ? he thought. Mary was beautiful ; Mary hardly knew him . . . Mary undoubtedly had a dozen other men begging for a chance to see her.

" If all goes well, we'll be opening the new plant next spring," Davidson was saying. " That'll mean opportunities for the right men. I'll finally be in a position to do something for the men I've had my eyes on."

" Honestly, I had no idea," Arthur murmured.

" Oh, you'd be surprised how I keep my eyes open;" Davidson said complacently.

She'll never wait ! Arthur thought. *She's too beautiful to wait on street corners for me !* The silence stretched between them like a growing, living thing ; then Davidson was on his feet.

" Well, this has been very pleasant," he said.

" The pleasure's been all mine, sir," Arthur answered.

" Always like to know what's going on inside my men," Davidson said. He gave Arthur a heavy wink. " I'm only sorry we can't talk longer, Arthur. I'd like to, but I have a feeling my wife's waiting for me. Not being married, you don't know how women hate to be kept waiting."

At a quarter to six the traffic stretched ahead like a thrashing steel monster which held the city in its coils, but Arthur was almost past caring. It was suddenly a city of clocks that he saw outside the cab window. Big lighted clocks high up on office buildings, the bright sparkle of little diamond clocks on the wrists of passing women, the crazy chaos of clocks in jewellers' windows. *Mary will never wait*, he thought. *She's gone ! She's too beautiful to wait !*

He tapped on the partition and spoke to the driver. " Look here—can't we get along a little faster ? " he pleaded.

" Take it easy, sir," the driver said.

Life was like this, Arthur thought with a strange sense of bitterness and futility. Thirty-five minutes too late—a lifetime lost. It required the most miraculous fortune for two people to meet, a chance that no gambler would dream of giving odds on—and then the merest chance could sweep it all away forever. Again he saw Mary in his mind's eye ; her eyes, her nose, the wonderful way she dressed. Then Arthur remembered that he didn't even know her last name, or where she lived. He stopped thinking altogether after that.

The traffic kept thrashing aimlessly ; the clocks of the city swept inexorably towards tomorrow . . .

" Here we are," the driver said.

Arthur opened his eyes and blinked.

It wasn't possible, he thought. It was the last taunting climax of the dream. This wasn't himself—and that wasn't Mary. That couldn't be his Mary he saw on the street corner. It couldn't be five minutes past six and she still there, so beautiful, still waiting for him . . .

He leaped from the cab. He fought his way through the people on the pavement, but he neither saw nor felt them. All Arthur

saw was Mary, the sudden illumination flaring in her eyes and the little stretching motion of her hands . . .

The cabman stared into his rear-view mirror in growing bewilderment. He looked at his recent passenger, the thin little man of thirty-five with the down-at-heel shoes and the rimless glasses. He looked at the rather plain girl whom you wouldn't notice in a million years, the girl with last year's hair-style and the unfashionable clothes. He watched their fingers touch, but when he saw the girl's lips open suddenly in what could have been a laugh or might have been a sob, he felt acutely embarrassed. He felt that something private and extraordinary was happening, something that no stranger should stare at. Although he couldn't imagine what that something was, he drove off as fast as he could.

* * *

FRIEND TO MEN

A fairly just description of most of these fictional dogs, though one or two of them came as near to villainy as is caninely possible. Count one point for identifying the dog, one for the author, and one for the source, making a total of twenty four points. The answers are on page 51.

1. *Of all the men he had been forced to serve he loved only one, and when this friend was murdered he fled to a wilder existence.*
2. *He moved in the highest circles and he had a very pertinent question to ask.*
3. *She was "rather prim and particular," but so very devoted to her three little charges.*
4. *To say nothing of this dog would be to overlook an important, if unwilling, participant in an eventful river trip.*
5. *He was particularly well qualified for his post as watch-dog, so those who wished to pass unscathed found it politic to yield him his proverbial tribute.*
6. *He was his master's only friend, according to the epitaph which the poet inscribed on his tombstone.*
7. *"Gaunt, savage, and as large as a small lioness", its eerie cry struck terror into the hearts of all who heard it, and brought the threat of death to the family which it haunted.*
8. *He had been such a good little animal that the Canine Valhalla granted him from dawn to sunset to make his own private carnival.*

THE MAN UPSTAIRS

Douglas picked up the sharpest, biggest knife, very calmly opened the door and closed it

by RAY BRADBURY

HE remembered how carefully and expertly Grandmother would fondle the cold cut guts of the chicken and withdraw the marvels therein ; the wet shining loops of meat-smelling intestine, the muscled lump of heart, the gizzard with the collection of seeds in it. How neatly and nicely Grandma would slit the chicken's breast and push her fat little hand in to deprive it of its medals. These would be segregated, some in pans of water, others in paper to be thrown to the dog later, perhaps. And then the ritual of taxidermy, stuffing the bird with watered, seasoned bread, and performing surgery with a swift, bright needle, stitch after pulled tight stitch.

But for all the miracle of surgery, the bird would never survive the operation. It was only transported immediately into a hell and poked and basted and cooked until such time as the other surgeons gathered at the festive board and took up their scalpels to attack. This was one of the prime thrills of Douglas's eleven-year-old life span.

The knife collection, itself, was an intrigue.

It lay abed in the various squeaking drawers of the large wooden kitchen table. A magic table, from which Grandmama, admittedly a rather kindly, gentle-faced and white-haired old witch, would draw paraphernalia for her miracles. The knives seemed to be most important in the dissection and investigation of chicken and other like fowl.

Altogether, moving his small lips, Douglas counted twenty knives of varying shapes and sizes. And each was unfailingly polished into a sharp mirror in which he could find his red hair and freckles distorted brilliantly.

He was to be quiet while Grandmama worked over her split animals. You could stand across the table from her, your nose tucked over the edge, watching, but any loose boy talk might interfere with the spell. It was a wonder watching Grandma brandish silver shakers over the bird, supposedly sprinkling showers of mummy-dust and pulverized Indian bones, muttering mystical verses under her toothless breath.

Douglas at last gathered courage under him like a coiled spring and let fly with:

"Grammy, am I like that inside?" He pointed at the chicken.

"Like what, child?"

"Am I like *that*, inside?"

"Yes; a little more orderly and presentable, but just about the same—"

"And more *of* it," added Douglas, proud of his guts.

"Yes," said Grandma. "More of it."

"Grandpa has lots more than me. His sticks out in front so he can rest his elbows on it, Grammy."

Grandma laughed and shook her head.

Douglas said, "And Lucie Williams, down the street, she—"

"Hush, child!" cried Grandma.

"But she's got—"

"Never you mind what she's got! That's different. You just shush up about Lucie!"

"But why is *she* different?"

"A darning-needle dragon-fly is coming by some day soon to sew up your mouth," said Grandma, firmly.

Douglas retreated immediately, then thoughtfully came back with, "How do you *know* I've got insides like that, Grandma?"

"I just know, that's all. Go 'way now."

Scowling, Douglas thumped off to the living room, still bothered about the wealth of knowledge obtainable from adults lacking absolute proof. They were so *darn* right.

The house bell jangled.

Through the front door glass as he ran down the hall, Douglas saw a straw hat. He opened the door, irritated at the continuous, again and again jangle of the bell.

"Good morning, child, is the lady of the house at home?"

Cold grey eyes in a long smooth walnut-coloured face gazed upon him. The man was tall, thin, and carried a suitcase, a brief-case, an umbrella under one bent arm, gloves rich and thick and grey on his thin hands, and wore a horribly new straw hat.

Douglas backed up. "She's busy."

"I wish to rent her upstairs room, as advertised."

"We've got ten boarders and it's already rented, go away."

"Douglas!" Grandma was behind him suddenly. "How do you do?" she said to the stranger. "Won't you step in? Go right on upstairs. Never mind this child."

"Quite all right." Unsmiling, the man stepped stiffly in. Douglas watched them ascend out of sight, heard Grandma detailing the conveniences of the upstairs room. A suitcase bumped down on the upstairs floor, and soon Grandma hurried down to take

sheets from the linen-closet, pile them on Douglas and send him scurrying up to the newly rented room.

Douglas paused at the room's threshold. It was transformed simply by the man being in the room a moment. The straw hat lay on the bed, the umbrella leaned stiff against one wall like a dead bat with dark wings tucked. Douglas blinked at the umbrella. The man stood in the centre of the room, his suitcase at his feet.

"Here." Douglas decorated the bed with linen. "We eat at twelve sharp and if you don't come down the soup'll get cold. Grandma fixes it so it will, every time."

The man counted out ten pennies, tinkled them into Douglas's blouse pocket. "We shall be friends," he said.

It was funny, the man having nothing but pennies. No silver at all, no dimes, no quarters.. Just new copper pennies.

Douglas thanked him. "I'll drop these in my dime bank when I get them changed into a dime."

"Saving money, young fellow?"

"Got six dollars and fifty cents. This makes sixty cents. For my camp trip in August."

"I must wash now," said the tall, strange man.

Once, at midnight, Douglas had awakened to hear a storm rumbling outside, the cold hard wind shaking the house, the rain driving against the windows. And then a bolt of lightning had landed outside the window with a silent, terrific pounding. He remembered that fear. That fear of looking around at his room, seeing it strange and terrible in the instantaneous light.

It was the same, now, in this room. He stood looking at the stranger. This room was no longer the same, but changed indefinably, because this man, as quick as a lightning bolt, had shed his light about it. Douglas did not like it.

The door closed in his face.

The wooden fork came down, went up with mashed potatoes. Mr. Koberman, for that was his name, had brought the fork and the wooden knife and spoon with him when Grandma called lunch.

"Mrs. Spaulding," he had said, quietly. "My own cutlery; please use it. I will have lunch today, but from tomorrow on, only breakfast and supper."

Grandma bustled in and out, bearing steaming tureens of soup and beans and mashed potatoes to impress her new boarder, while Douglas sat rattling his silverware on his plate, because he had discovered it irritated Mr. Koberman.

"I know a trick," said Douglas. "Watch." He picked a fork tine with his fingernail. He pointed at various sectors of the table, like a magician. Wherever he pointed, the sound of the vibrating

fork-tine emerged, like a metal elfin voice. Simply done, of course. He simply pressed the fork handle on the table-top, secretly. The vibration came from the wood like a sounding board. It looked like magic. "There, *there, and there*!" exclaimed Douglas, happily plucking the fork again. He pointed at Mr. Koberman's soup and the noise came from it.

Mr. Koberman's walnut-coloured face was hard and firm and awful. He pushed the soup bowl away, his lips twisting, and fell back in his chair.

Grandma appeared. "Why, what's wrong, Mr. Koberman?"

"I cannot eat the soup," he said.

"Why?"

Mr. Koberman glared at Douglas.

"Because I am full and can eat no more. Thank you."

Excusing himself, Mr. Koberman walked upstairs.

"What did you do, just then?" Grandma asked Douglas.

"Nothing. Grammy, why does he eat with wooden spoons?"

"You're not to question! When do you go back to school, anyway?"

"Seven weeks."

"Oh, my goodness," said Grandma.

Half way to the second floor was a large, sun-filled window. It was framed by six-inch panes of orange, purple, blue, red and green glass. Some panes were yellow, some a wondrous burgundy.

In the enchanted late afternoons, when the sun fell through to strike upon the landing and slide down the stair banister, Douglas stood entranced by this window, peering at the world through the multi-coloured panes.

Now a blue world. Douglas pressed his nostrils against the blue pane, saw the blue-blue sky, the blue people and the blue street-cars and the trotting blue dogs.

Now—he shifted panes—there was an amber world. Two lemonish women glided by, looking like daughters of Fu Manchu. Douglas giggled. This pane made even the sunlight more purely golden, like toffee spilled on everything.

Douglas heard a noise above him. He knew Mr. Koberman stood outside his door, watching.

Not turning, Douglas observed. "All kinds of worlds. Blue ones, red ones, yellow ones. All different."

After a long pause, Mr. Koberman said, distractedly:

"That is true. All kinds of worlds. Yes. All different."

The door closed. The hall was empty. Mr. Koberman had gone in. Douglas shrugged and found a new pane.

"Oh! Everything's *pink*!"

It was simple as a rain-drop. Spooning his morning cereal, Douglas felt a simple, pure white flame of hatred stand inside him, burning with a steady, unflickering beauty. Upstairs, this morning, Mr. Koberman's door had been ajar, the room empty. He had looked in, with distaste.

It was Mr. Koberman's room now. Once it had been bright and flowery when Miss Sadlowe had lived there; full of nasturtiums and bright balls of knitting wool. When Mr. Caples had lived there it reflected him: his athletic vivacity, his tennis shoes on a chair, a disembodied sweater crumpled on the bed, wrinkled pants in the closet, cut-outs of pretty girls on the bureau. But now . . .

Now the room was Koberman Land. Bare and clean and cold and everything microscopically set in place. Not a microbe or dust-mote or oxygen cell existed in the room without having an appointed and irrevocable station.

Douglas finished breakfast, feeding simultaneously on one part buttered toast, two parts hatred. He walked up to the landing and stared out of the coloured glasses.

Mr. Koberman strolled by outside, on his morning exercise. He walked straight, cane looped on arm half way to elbow, his straw hat glued to his head with patent oil.

Mr. Koberman was a blue man walking through a blue world with blue trees and blue flowers and—something else.

There was something about Mr. Koberman. Douglas squinted. The blue glass *did* things to Mr. Koberman. His face, his suit—

There was no time to fathom it. Mr. Koberman glanced up just then, saw Douglas, and raised his cane-umbrella as if to strike, then put it down swiftly and hurried to the front door.

"Young man," he said, coming up the stairs, "what were you doing?"

"Just looking."

Mr. Koberman stood, fighting himself. The veins stood out on his face like small, grey wires. His eyes were deep black holes.

Saying nothing, he went downstairs for another walk.

Douglas played in his sand-box in the backyard for half an hour. At about nine-thirty he heard the crash and the shattering tinkle. He jumped up. He heard Grandma's slippers scuffing in the hall, hurriedly, then scuffing back to the kitchen. The screen door *swannged* open, on its wire spring restrainer.

"Douglas!" She held the old razor strop in her hand. "I told you time and again never to fling your basketball against the house! Oh, I could just cry!"

"I've been sitting right here," he protested.

"Come in here! See what you've done!"

The coloured window panes were tumbled in a rainbow chaos on the upstairs landing. The basketball lay on the ruins.

Before Douglas could even begin telling his innocence, Grandma struck him seven stinging whops on his rump. Screaming, Douglas leaped like a fish, and wherever he landed he was whopped again! He sang an age-old song to his wild dancing.

Much later, hiding his mind in a pile of sand in the sand-box, like an ostrich, Douglas nursed his pain. He knew who'd thrown that basketball to shatter the coloured windows. A man with a straw hat and a stiff umbrella, and a cold, grey room. He dribbled tears in the sand. Just wait. Just wait.

The thin, tinkling shuff-shuff noise was Grandmas sweeping up the glittering debris. She brought it round to the back and cascaded it into the dust-bin. Blue, pink, white, yellow meteors of glass dropped brightly down. Grandma looked broken-hearted.

When she was gone, Douglas dragged himself over to save three pieces of the precious glass; pink and green and blue. He had an idea why Mr. Koberman disliked the coloured windows. These—he clinked them in his fingers—would be worth saving.

Mr. Koberman worked nights and slept all day. Each morning at eight he arrived home, devoured a light breakfast, took a brief walk, then climbed primly upstairs to sleep soundlessly throughout the day until six at night, when he came down to the huge supper with all the other boarders.

Mr. Koberman's sleeping habits made it necessary for Douglas to be quiet. Not being quiet by nature, frustration set in on him like a growing abscess.

Resultantly, when Grandma visited next door at Mrs. Eddy's or bought groceries at Mrs. Singer's, Douglas would vent his repressions by stamping up and down stairs beating upon a drum. Golf-balls, rolled slowly down the steps, were also delightful, and flushing all the toilets three times in succession.

After three days, Douglas realized he was getting no complaints. On the fourth day, after Grandma had gone to the store, he yelled outside Mr. Koberman's door ten minutes straight, without criticism. Then, and only then, did he dare to try the door, carefully, and open it.

The room was in half-light, the shades drawn. Mr. Koberman lay on top of the covers of his bed, in pyjamas, breathing gently, up and down. He didn't move. His face was motionless.

"Hello, Mr. Koberman."

The colourless walls echoed the man's regular breathing.

"Mr. Koberman, hello!"

Bouncing the golf-ball, Douglas advanced. No response. He

yelled. Still no answer. Mr. Koberman lay like a papier-mâché dummy, not complaining, his eyes shut.

Douglas searched the room with quick eyes. On the bureau rested the wooden eating utensils. This gave Douglas an idea. He ran and got a silver fork, came back. Picking the tines he held it close to the sleeping face.

Mr. Koberman winced. He twisted on his bed, groaning, muttering bitterly.

Response. Good. Fine.

Another ting of the fork. Mr. Koberman twitched in a nightmare of vibrations, but could not wake up. He didn't look as if he could, even if he wanted to.

Douglas remembered the coloured glass. He drew a pink shard from his pocket and stared through it at Mr. Koberman.

The clothes dissolved from Mr. Koberman. The pink glass had something to do with it. Or maybe it was the clothes themselves, being *on* Mr. Koberman. Douglas licked his lips. He could see *inside* Mr. Koberman. Mr. Koberman was—weird inside.

Very weird. Very interesting.

He was beginning to enjoy himself when the front door banged. Grandmá was home. Douglas had to come downstairs, frustrated, trying to look innocent.

When a slow heavy tread filled the hall, and a thick mahogany cane thumped in the umbrella stand, that always meant Grandfather was home for the day. He arrived from his newspaper office each night, shortly ahead of the boarders, at five-fifteen, a copy of his own newspaper folded into his black coat-pocket along with a pink peppermint stick to be used expressly for spoiling Douglas's dinner-appetite.

Douglas ran to embrace the large stomach that was Grandpa's main defence against a vigorously long life-battle with circumstance. Grandpa, peering down over the cliff of that stomach, cried, " Hello, down there ! "

Seated in the great Morris chair, his spectacles attached, Grandpa scanned the paper with a keen eye.

" Grandma cut chickens again today. It's fun watching," said Douglas.

Grandpa kept reading. " Chickens ? Again ? That's twice this week. She's the chickenest woman. You like to watch her cut 'em, eh ? Cold blooded little pepper, ha ! "

Douglas felt the subterranean laughter explode down through the huge old bones, echo out on Grandpa's vibrant knee-cap.

" I'm just curious," said Douglas.

" You *are*," rumbled Grandpa, pursing his lips, scowling. " I

remember that day when the young lady was killed at the railway station. Didn't bother you a mite. You just walked over and looked at her, blood and all."

"But, why shouldn't I look?"

"Doesn't it make you sick?" Grandpa put the paper aside.

"No."

"Queer duck. Sensible, though. Stay that way, Dougie-boy. Fear nothing, ever in life. Life's full of things not worth fearing. Bodies are bodies and blood is blood. The only bad things are those we make in our minds. We teach each other fear. We learn certain reactions to certain stimuli. Death, for instance. Orientals deem it fairly fine and honourable to die. But some European cultures have trumped up notions about death being a dark horror. Why—"

He stopped, blinked, swallowed, and laughed.

"What *am* I saying? You don't understand one word—"

"Sure, I do. Go ahead, Gramps. It's fun."

"Funny duck. Your father raised you funny. But then, him being a military man, and you so close to him till you came here last year."

"I'm not funny. I'm just *me*."

"There—" Grandpa nodded, "you *have* a point! There's no norm among humans, not really. Certain cultural norms, perhaps, but individual norms, no, no."

This seemed like the moment ripened on the tree of time for picking. Douglas picked.

"Gramps, what if a man didn't have no heart, lungs or stomach?"

Grandpa was used to such questions. "Why, then, I guess he'd be dead."

"No, I don't mean that. I mean, what if he didn't have a heart or no lungs or no stomach but still walked around? Alive."

"That," rumbled Gramps, "would be a miracle."

"Besides," said Douglas, swiftly. "I don't mean a—a miracle. I mean—what if he was all *different* inside? Not like me."

"Oh, I see. Umm. Well, he wouldn't be quite human then, would he, boy?"

"I guess not." Douglas stared at the watch-fobbed stomach. "Gramps, you got a heart and a brain and lungs, Gramps?"

"I should live to tell you!"

"How do you *know*?"

"Uh—" Gramps stopped. "Well." He had to laugh. "Tell the truth, I don't know. Never seen them. Never been to a doctor, never had an x-ray. Might as well be potato-solid for all I know."

"How about me? Have *I* got a stomach?"

" You certainly *have* ! " said Grandma, in the parlour entrance. " 'Cause I feed it. And you've lungs, because you scream loud enough to wake the dead. And you've dirty hands, go wash them ! Dinner's ready. Grandpa, come on. Douglas, git ! "

She tinkled a little black lacquered metal bell in the hall.

In the rush of boarders streaming downstairs, Grandpa, if he had intentions of questioning Douglas further about the weird conversation, lost his chance. If dinner delayed an instant more, Grandma and the potatoes would develop simultaneous lumps.

The other boarders, laughing and talking at the table, Mr. Koberman silent and sullen among them—this attitude being attributed to liver trouble by Grandma—were put into a cold sweat by Grandfather who cleared his throat and spoke about the recent deaths in the town.

" Save that for later, when we drink our coffee," said Grandma.

" It's certainly enough to make a newspaper editor prick up his ancient ears," said Grandpa, carefully eyeing them all. " That young Miss Larsson, lived over across the ravine, now. Found her dead three days ago for no reason, just funny kinds of tattoos all over her, and a facial expression would make Dante cringe. And that other young lady, what was her name ? Whitely ? She disappeared and never did come back."

" Those things happen alla time," said Mr. Peters, the garage mechanic, chewing. " Ever peek in the Missing Peoples' Bureau file ? It's *that* long." He illustrated. " Can't tell *what* happens to most of 'em."

Grandma cut in. " Anyone want more dressing ? " She ladelled liberal portions from the chicken's sad interior. Douglas watched, thinking about how that chicken had had two kinds of guts—God-made and Man-made.

Well, how about *three* kinds of guts ? Eh ? Why not ?

Conversation continued merry about the mysterious death of so-and-so, and, oh yes, remember a week ago, Marion Barsumian died of heart failure, but maybe that had nothing to do with it, or did it, you're crazy, forget it, why talk about it at supper, on a full stomach ? So.

Cigarettes lit, the diners idled lazily into the parlour, where Grandpa let somebody interrupt him on occasions when he needed breath.

" Never can tell," said the garage mechanic. " Maybe we got a vampire in town."

" In this year of grace ? Oh, go on now."

" Sure. Kill 'em with silver bullets. Anything silver for that matter. I read it in a book somewhere, once. Sure, I did."

Douglas sat on the floor looking up at Mr. Koberman who ate with wooden knives and forks and spoons, and carried only copper pennies in his pocket.

"It'd be poor judgment," said Grandpa, "to call anything by a name. We don't even know what a hobgoblin or a vampire or a troll is. Could be a lot of things. You can't heave them into categories with labels, and say they'll act one way or another. That'd be silly. They're just people, people who *do* things."

"Good evening, everyone," said Mr. Koberman, and got up and went out for his evening walk to work.

The radio was turned on. Card games were played. Ice-cream was bought and served. Then, the goodnights, and into bed.

The stars, the moon, the wind, the clock ticking and the chiming of hours into dawn, the sun coming up, and here it was another morning, another day, and Mr. Koberman coming from his walk after breakfast. Douglas stood off like a small mechanism whirring and watching with carefully microscopic eyes.

At noon, Grandma went to the store to buy groceries.

Douglas yelled outside Mr. Koberman's door for a minute, and then tried to enter. This time the door was locked. He had to run to get the pass-key.

Clutching the pass-key and the pieces of coloured glass nervously, he entered and closed the door and heard Mr. Koberman breathing deeply. Douglas placed the blue glass fragment over his own eyes.

Looking through it, he found himself in a blue room, in a blue world different from the world he knew. As different as was the red world. Aquamarine furniture, cobalt bed-clothes, turquoise ceilings, and the sullen dark blue of Mr. Koberman's face and arms, and his blue chest rising, falling. Also—something else.

Mr. Koberman's eyes were wide open, staring at him with a hungry darkness. Douglas fell back, pulled the blue glass from his face. Mr. Koberman's eyes were shut. Blue glass again—open. Blue glass away—shut. Blue glass again—open. Away—shut. Funny. Douglas experimented, trembling. Through the glass the eyes seemed to peer hungrily, avidly through the closed lids, like little torches. Without the blue glass, tight shut.

But it was the rest of Mr. Koberman's body . . .

Douglas must have stood amazed for five minutes. Thinking about blue worlds, red worlds, yellow worlds, side by side, living together like glass panes around the big white stair window. Side by side, the coloured panes, the different worlds; Mr. Koberman had said so himself.

"Mr. Koberman, wake up!"

No response.

" Mr. Koberman, where do you work at night ? Mr. Koberman, where do you work ? "

A little breeze stirred the blue window shade.

" In a red world or a green world or a yellow one, Mr. Koberman ? "

Over everything was a blue glass silence.

" Wait there," said Douglas.

He walked out of the room, walked downstairs to the kitchen and pulled open the great squeaking drawers where all the knives lay gleaming. He picked out the sharpest, biggest one. Very calmly he walked into the hall, climbed back up the stairs again, opened the door to Mr. Koberman's room and closed it.

Grandma was busy fingering a pie-crust into a dish when Douglas entered the kitchen to put something on the table.

" Grandma, what's this ? "

She glanced up briefly, over her glasses. " I don't know."

It was square, like a box, and elastic. It was bright orange in colour. It had four square tubes, coloured blue, attached to it. It smelled funny. Not good but yet not bad.

" Ever see anything like it, Grandma ? "

" No."

" That's what *I* thought."

Douglas left it there, went out of the kitchen. Five minutes later he returned with something else. " How about *this* ? "

It resembled a bright pink linked chain with a purple triangle at one end.

" Don't bother me," sniffed Grandma. " It's only a chain."

He went away. Next time he came with two hands full. A ring, a square, a pyramid, a rectangle—and other shapes. " This isn't all. Lots more where this came from."

Grandma said, " Yes, yes," in a far off tone, very busy.

" You were wrong, Grandma."

" About what ? "

" About all people being the same inside."

" Stop talking nonsense."

" Where's my piggy-bank ? " he asked.

" On the mantelpiece."

" Thanks."

He tramped into the parlour, reached up for the piggy-bank.

Grandpa came home from the office at five-fifteen.

" Grandpa, come upstairs."

" Sure, son. Why ? "

" Something to show you. It's not nice. But it's interesting."

Grandpa chuckled, followed his grandson's feet up to Mr. Koberman's room.

"Grandma mustn't know about this; she wouldn't like it," said Douglas. He pushed the door wide. "There."

Grandfather gasped.

Douglas was to remember the last scene all the rest of his life. Standing over the naked body, the coroner and his assistants. Grandma, downstairs, asking somebody, "What's going on up there?" and Grandpa saying, shakily, "I'll take Douglas away on a long vacation so he can forget this whole ghastly, ghastly affair."

Douglas said, "I don't see anything bad. I don't feel bad."

The coroner shivered and said: "Koberman's dead, all-right."

His assistant sweated. "Did you see those *things* in the pan of water and in the wrapping paper?"

"Oh, my God, my God, yes, I saw them."

The coroner bent over Mr. Koberman's body. "This better be kept secret, boys. It wasn't murder. It was a mercy the boy acted. God knows what may have happened if he hadn't."

"What was Koberman—a vampire? A monster?"

"Maybe. I don't know. I don't know anything. Something—not human." The coroner moved his hands deftly over the suture.

Douglas was proud of his work. He'd gone to much trouble. He had watched Grandma carefully and remembered. Needle and thread and all. All in all, Mr. Koberman was as neat a job as any chicken ever popped into hell by Grandma.

"I heard the boy say that Koberman *lived* even after all those *things* were taken out of him. Kept on *living*."

"Did the boy say that?"

"He did."

"Then, what killed Koberman?"

The coroner drew a few strands of sewing thread from their bedding. "This—" he said.

Sunlight blinked coldly off a half-revealed treasure trove; six dollars and seventy cents' worth of silver dimes inside Mr. Koberman's chest.

"I think Douglas made a wise investment," said the coroner, sewing the flesh back up over the "dressing" quickly.

* * *

PORTRAIT FROM LIFE

During Picasso's recent exhibition in Warsaw he surprised a burglar in his lodgings. The artist was able to give the police a drawing of the man who had succeeded in escaping. With its help the police arrested 50 people, two horses, a tin of sardines, a cat and a corkscrew.

PETERBOROUGH, *in The Daily Telegraph*

SEA-COW

It trusted no one . . . it had no friends

by JOHN STEINBECK

IN the time before our departure for the Gulf we sat on the pier and watched the sardine purse-seiners riding among the floating grapefruit rinds. A breakwater is usually a dirty place, as though the tampering with the shore line is obscene and impractical to the cleansing action of the sea. And we talked to our prospective crew.

Tex, our engineer, was caught in the ways of the harbour. He was born in the Panhandle of Texas and early he grew to love Diesel engines. They are so simple and powerful, blocks of pure logic in shining metal. They appealed to some sense of neat thinking in Tex. He might be sentimental and illogical in some things, but he liked his engines to be true and logical.

He is a sure man with an engine. When he goes below he is identified with his engine. He moves about, not seeing, not looking, but knowing. No matter how tired or how deeply asleep he may be, one miss of the engine jerks him to his feet and into the engine-room before he is awake, and we truly believe that a burned bearing or a cracked shaft gives him sharp pains in his stomach. . .

We come now to a piece of equipment which still brings anger to our hearts, and, we hope, some venom to our pen. Perhaps in self-defence against suit, we should say, "The outboard motor mentioned in this book is purely fictitious and any resemblance to outboard motors living or dead is coincidental." We shall call this contraption, for the sake of secrecy, a Hansen Sea-Cow—a dazzling little piece of machinery, all aluminium paint and touched here and there with spots of red. The Sea-Cow was built to sell, to dazzle the eyes, to splutter its way into the unwary heart.

We took it along for the skiff. It was intended that it should push us ashore and back, should drive our boat into estuaries and along the borders of little coves. But we had not reckoned with one thing. Recently, industrial civilization has reached its peak of reality and has lunged forward into something that approaches mysticism. In the Sea-Cow factory where steel fingers tighten screws, bend and mould, measure and divide, some curious mathematic has occurred. And that secret so long sought has

been found. Life has been created. The machine is at last stirred. A soul and a malignant mind have been born.

Our Hansen Sea-Cow was not only a living thing but a mean, irritable, contemptible, vengeful, mischievous, hateful living thing. In the six weeks of our association we observed it, at first mechanically and then, as its living reactions became more and more apparent, psychologically. And we determined one thing to our satisfaction. When and if these ghoulish little motors learn to reproduce themselves the human species is doomed. For their hatred of us is so great that they will wait and plan and organize and one night, in a roar of little exhausts, they will wipe us out.

We do not think that Mr. Hansen, inventor of the Sea-Cow, father of the outboard motor, knew what he was doing. We think the monster he created was as accidental and arbitrary as the beginning of any other life. Only one thing differentiates the Sea-Cow from the life we know. Whereas the forms that are familiar to us are the results of billions of years of mutation and complication, life and intelligence emerged simultaneously in the Sea-Cow. It is more than a species. It is a whole new redefinition of life. We observed the following traits in it and we were able to check them again and again.

1. Incredibly lazy, the Sea-Cow loved to ride on the back of a boat, trailing its propeller daintily in the water while we rowed.

2. It required the same amount of gasoline whether it ran or not, apparently being able to absorb this fluid through its body walls without recourse to explosion. It had always to be filled at the beginning of every trip.

3. It had apparently some clairvoyant powers, and was able to read our minds, particularly when they were inflamed with emotion. Thus, on every occasion when we were driven to the point of destroying it, it started and ran with a great noise and excitement. This served the double purpose of saving its life and of resurrecting in our minds a false confidence in it.

4. It had many cleavage points, and when attacked with a screwdriver, fell apart in simulated death, a trait it had in common with opossums, armadillos, and several members of the sloth family, which also fall apart in simulated death when attacked with a screwdriver.

5. It hated Tex, sensing perhaps that his knowledge of mechanics was capable of diagnosing its shortcomings.

6. It completely refused to run: (*a*) when the waves were high, (*b*) when the wind blew, (*c*) at night, early morning, and evening, (*d*) in rain, dew, or fog, (*e*) when the distance to be covered was more than two hundred yards. But on warm, sunny days when the weather was warm and the white beach close by—in a

word, on days when it would have been a pleasure to row—the Sea-Cow started at a touch and would not stop.

7. It loved no one, trusted no one. It had no friends.

Perhaps towards the end, our observations were a little warped by emotion. Time and again as it sat on the stern with its pretty little propeller lying idly in the water, it was very close to death. And in the end, even we were infected with its malignancy and dishonesty. We should have destroyed it, but we did not. Arriving home, we gave it a new coat of aluminium paint, spotted it at points with new red enamel, and sold it. And we might have rid the world of this mechanical cancer!

* * *

ANSWERS to FRIEND TO MEN on page 36

1. *Buck, in "The Call Of The Wild," by Jack London.*
2. *His Highness' dog in the epigram "On the Collar of a Dog which I gave to his Royal Highness," by Alexander Pope.*
3. *Nana, in "Peter Pan," by J. M. Barrie.*
4. *Montmorency, in "Three Men In A Boat," by Jerome K. Jerome.*
5. *Cerberus, the three-headed dog at the gates of Hades, mentioned by Homer in the Odyssey, among numerous classical sources.*
6. *Boatswain, the dog for whom Byron wrote the epitaph:*

   "To mark a friend's remains these stones arise;
   I never knew but one,—and here he lies."
7. *The Hound of the Baskervilles, in the book of that title by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.*
8. *The dog who dies at the end of his one day of glorious life, in "The Little Dog's Day," by Rupert Brooke.*

SOLUTION to ARGOSY CROSSWORD on page 144

Across. 1, Flight commander. 9, Road-metal. 10, Civic. 11, Hothead. 12, Rostrum. 13, Eve. 14. Tactful. 17, Despise. 19, Macbeth. 22, Laconic. 24, Ali. 25, Brixton. 26, Newnham. 28, Irene. 29, Beethoven. 30, Gilt-edged stocks.

Down. 1, For the time being. 2, Inapt. 3, Himself. 4, Citadel. 5, Mildred. 6, Accuses. 7, Diversion. 8, Recommencements. 15, Cochineal. 16, Ult. 18, Era. 20, Extreme. 21, Handbag. 22, Linseed. 23, Cowshot. 27, Havoc.

PER ARDUA

Nature has always been stronger than education

VOLTAIRE, 1694-1778

He remembered that first tremendous ordeal of taking prep . . . . The sudden hush as he took his place at the desk on the dais; the scowl he assumed to cover his inward nervousness; the tall clock ticking behind him and the smells of ink and varnish; the last blood-red rays slanting in slabs through the stained-glass windows. Someone dropped a desk lid—quickly, he must take everyone by surprise; he must show them that there was no nonsense about him. "You there in the fifth row—you with the red hair—what's your name?"—"Colley, sir"—"Very well, Colley, you have a hundred lines." No trouble at all after that. He had won his first round.

JAMES HILTON, *Good-bye, Mr. Chips*

No Change

I had in custom to come to school late
Not for to learn, but for a countenance,
With my fellows was ready to debate,
To jangle or jape was set all my pleasaunce;
Whereof rebuked, this was my chevisaunce—
To forge a lesyng, and thereupon to muse,
When I trespassed, myselfen to excuse.

To my betters I did no reverence,
Of my sovereigns gave no heed at all,
Waxed obstinate by disobedience,
Ran into gardens, apples there I stole;
To gather fruits spared neither hedge nor wall,
To plukke grapes in other mennes vines
Was I more ready than for to say matynes.

JOHN LYDGATE, 1370-1451

The Quest

After they had got rid of the governess, Sir Ector said, "After all, damn it all, we can't have the boys runnin' about all day like hooligans, after all, can we, damn it all? Ought to be havin' a first-rate eddication, at their age. When I was their age I was

doin' all this Latin and stuff at five o'clock every mornin'. Happiest time of my life. Pass the port."

Sir Grummore Grummursum, who was staying the night because he had been benighted out questin' after a specially long run, said that when he was their age he was swished every mornin' because he would go hawkin' instead of learnin'. He attributed to this weakness the fact that he could never get beyond the Future Simple of Ūtor. It was a third of the way down the left-hand page, he said. He thought it was page ninety-seven. He passed the port.

Sir Ector said, "Had a good quest today?"

Sir Grummore said, "Oh, not so bad. Rattlin' good day, in fact . . ."

"But about these boys and all this Latin and that . . . Amo, amas, you know, and runnin' about like hooligans: what would you advise?"

"Good port this," said Sir Grummore.

"Got it from a friend of mine," said Sir Ector . . .

"Couldn't send them to Eton, I suppose?" inquired Sir Grummore cautiously. "Long way and all that, we know."

"Isn't so much the distance," said Sir Ector, "but that giant What's-'is-name is in the way. Have to pass through his country, you understand . . ."

"The only other thing," said Sir Grummore, "is to have a tutor."

"You mean a fellow-who teaches you," said Sir Ector wisely . . . "Have some more port . . . But even if you were to have a tutor, I don't see how you would get him."

"Advertise," said Sir Grummore.

"I have advertised," said Sir Ector. "I put it in the Humberland News and Cardoile Advertiser."

"The only other way," said Sir Grummore, "is to start a quest."

"You mean a quest for a tutor," explained Sir Ector.

"That's it," said Sir Grummore.

"Hic, Hac, Hoc," said Sir Ector. "Have some more port."

"Hunc," said Sir Grummore.

T. H. White, *The Sword in the Stone*

Higher Education

"Whom are you?" said he, for he had been to night school.

George Ade, *Bang! Bang: The Steel Box*

GENTLEMAN FROM PARIS

by JOHN DICKSON CARR

Carlton House Hotel,
Broadway, New York,
14th April, 1849

MY dear brother :

Were my hand more steady, Maurice, or my soul less agitated, I should have written to you before this. *All is safe :* so much I tell you at once. For the rest, I seek sleep in vain ; and this is not merely because I find myself a stranger and a foreigner in New York. Listen and judge.

We discussed, I think, the humiliation that a Frenchman must go to England ere he could take passage in a reliable ship for America. The *Britannia* steam-packet departed from Liverpool on the second of the month, and arrived here on the seventeenth. Do not smile when I tell you that my first visit on American soil was to Platt's Saloon, under Wallack's Theatre.

Great God, that voyage !

On my stomach I could hold not even champagne.

" Be good enough," I said to a fur-capped coachman, when I had struggled through the horde of Irish immigrants, " to drive me to some fashionable place of refreshment."

The coachman had no difficulty in understanding my English, which pleased me. And how extraordinary are these " saloons " !

The saloon of M. Platt was loud with the thump of hammers cracking ice, which is delivered in large blocks. Though the hand-coloured gas-globes, and the rose-paintings on the front of the bar-counter, were as fine as we could see at the Three Provincial Brothers in Paris, yet I confess that the place did not smell so agreeably. A number of gentlemen, wearing hats perhaps a trifle taller than is fashionable at home, lounged at the bar-counter and shouted. I attracted no attention until I called for a sherry cobbler.

One of the " bartenders," as they are called in New York, gave me a sharp glance as he prepared the glass.

" Just arrived from the Old Country, I bet ? " said he in no unfriendly tone.

Though it seemed strange to hear France mentioned in this way, I smiled and bowed assent.

" Italian, maybe ? " said he.

★ ***This is the story that won the two thousand dollar award, First Prize in a recent world competition.***

This bartender, of course, could not know how deadly was the insult.

" Sir," I replied, " I am a Frenchman."

And now in truth he was pleased! His fat face opened and smiled like a distorted, gold-toothed flower.

" Is that so, now!" he exclaimed. " And what might your name be? Unless "—and here his face darkened with that sudden defensiveness and suspicion which, for no reason I can discern, will often strike into American hearts—" unless," said he, " you don't want to give it? "

" Not at all," I assured him earnestly. " I am Armand de Lafayette, at your service."

My dear brother, what an extraordinary effect!

It was silence. All sounds, even the faint whistling of the gas-jets, seemed to die away in that stone-flagged room. Every man along the line of the bar was looking at me. I was conscious only of faces, mostly with whiskers under the chin instead of down the cheek-bones, turned on me in basilisk stare.

" Well, well, well! " almost sneered the bartender. " You wouldn't be no relation of the *Marquis* de Lafayette? "

It was my turn to be astonished. Though our father has always forbidden us to mention the name of our late uncle, due to his republican sympathies, yet I knew he occupied small place in the history of France and it puzzled me to comprehend how these people had heard of him.

" The late Marquis de Lafayette," I was obliged to admit, " was my uncle."

" You better be careful, young feller," suddenly yelled a grimy little man with a pistol buckled under his long coat. " We don't like being diddled, we don't."

" Sir," I replied, taking my bundle of papers from my pocket and whacking them down on the bar-counter, " have the goodness to examine my credentials. Should you still doubt my identity, we can then debate the matter in any way which pleases you."

" This is furrin writing," shouted the bartender. " *I* can't read it! "

And then—how sweet was the musical sound on my ear!—I heard a voice addressing me in my own language.

"Perhaps, sir," said the voice, in excellent French and with great stateliness, "I may be able to render you some small service."

The newcomer, a slight man of dark complexion, drawn up under an old shabby cloak of military cut, stood a little way behind me. If I had met him on the boulevards, I might not have found him very prepossessing. He had a wild and wandering eye, with an even wilder shimmer of brandy. He was not very steady on his feet. And yet, Maurice, his manner! It was such that I instinctively raised my hat, and the stranger very gravely did the same.

"And to whom," said I, "have I the honour . . . ?"

"I am Thaddeus Perley, sir, at your service."

"Another furriner!" said the grimy little man, in disgust.

"I am indeed a foreigner," said M. Perley in English, with an accent like a knife. "A foreigner to this dram-shop. A foreigner to this neighbourhood. A foreigner to—" Here he paused, and his eyes acquired an almost frightening blaze of loathing. "Yet I never heard that the reading of French was so *very* singular an accomplishment."

Imperiously—and yet, it seemed to me, with a certain shrinking nervousness—M. Perley came closer and lifted the bundle of papers.

"Doubtless," he said loftily, "I should not be credited were I to translate these. But here," and he scanned several of the papers, "is a letter of introduction in English. It is addressed to President Zachary Taylor from the American minister at Paris."

Again, my brother, what an enormous silence! It was interrupted by a cry from the bartender, who had snatched the documents from M. Perley.

"Boys, this is no diddle," said he. "This gent is the real thing!"

"He ain't!" thundered the little grimy man, with incredulity.

"He is!" said the bartender. "I'll be a son of a roe, (*i.e.*, *biche*) if he ain't!"

Well, Maurice, you and I have seen how Paris mobs can change. Americans are even more emotional. In the wink of an eye hostility became frantic affection. My back was slapped, my hand wrung, my person jammed against the bar by a crowd fighting to order me more refreshment.

The name of Lafayette, again and again, rose like a holy diapason. In vain I asked why this should be so. They appeared to think I was joking, and roared with laughter. I thought of M. Thaddeus Perley, as one who could supply an explanation.

But in the first rush towards me M. Perley had been flung backwards. He fell sprawling in some wet stains of tobacco-juice on the floor, and now I could not see him at all. For myself, I was

weak from lack of food. A full beaker of whisky, which I was obliged to drink because all eyes were on me, made my head reel. Yet I felt compelled to raise my voice above the clamour.

" Gentlemen," I implored them, " will you hear me ? "

" Silence for Lafayette ! " said a big but very old man, with faded red whiskers. He had tears in his eyes, and he had been humming a catch called *Yankee Doodle.*

" Believe me," said I, " I am full of gratitude for your hospitality. But I have business in New York, business of immediate and desperate urgency. If you will allow me to pay my reckoning . . ."

"Your money's no good here, monseer," said the bartender. " You're going to get liquored-up good and proper."

" But I have no wish, believe me, to become liquored-up ! It might well endanger my mission ! In effect, I wish to go ! "

" Wait a minute," said the little grimy man, with a cunning look. " What *is* this here business ? "

You, Maurice, have called me quixotic. Perhaps you are right ; but what choice was left to me ?

" Has any gentleman here," I asked, " heard of Madame Thevenet, who lives at number 23 Thomas Street, near Hudson-Street ? "

" Old miser woman ? " asked a sportif character, who wore chequered trousers.

" I regret, sir, that you correctly describe her. Madame Thevenet is very rich. And I have come here," cried I, " to put right a damnable injustice ! "

" How's that ? " asked half a dozen.

" Madame Thevenet's daughter, Mademoiselle Claudine, lives in the worst of poverty at Paris. Madame herself has been brought here, under some spell, by a devil of a woman calling herself . . . Gentlemen, I implore you ! "

" And I bet you," cried the little grimy man with the pistol, " you're sweet on this daughter what's-her-name ? " He seemed delighted. " Ain't you, now ? "

How, I ask of all Providence, could these people have surprised my secret ? Yet I felt obliged to tell the truth.

" I will not conceal from you," I said, " that I have in truth a high regard for Mlle. Claudine. But this lady, believe me, is engaged to a friend of mine, an officer of artillery."

" Then what do you *get* out of it ? Eh ? " asked the grimy little man, with another cunning look.

The question puzzled me. I could not reply. But the bartender with the gold teeth leaned over.

" If you want to see the old Frenchie alive, monseer," said he, " you'd better git." (*Sic*, Maurice). " I hearn tell she had a stroke this morning."

But a dozen voices clamoured to keep me there, though this last intelligence sent me into despair. Then up rose the big and very old man with the faded whiskers.

"Which of you was with Washington?" said he, suddenly taking hold of the fierce little man's neckcloth, and speaking with contempt. "Make way for the nephew of Lafayette!"

They cheered me then. They hurried me to the door, they begged me to return, they promised they would await me. I looked round—nor can I say why—for M. Thaddeus Perley. He was sitting at a table by a pillar, under an open gas-jet; his face whiter than ever, still wiping stains of tobacco-juice from his cloak.

Never have I seen a more mournful prospect than Thomas Street, when my cab set me down there. Perhaps it was my state of mind; for if Mme. Thevenet had died without a sou left to her daughter: you conceive it?

The houses of Thomas Street were faced with dingy yellow brick, and a muddy sky hung over the chimney-pots. I found my spirit intolerably oppressed. Though heaven knows our Parisian streets are dirty enough, we do not allow pigs in them. Except for these, nothing moved in the forsaken street save a blind street-musician, with his dog and an instrument called a banjo; but even he was silent.

For some minutes, it seemed to me, I plied the knocker at number 23, with hideous noise. Nothing stirred. Finally, one part of the door swung open a little, as for an eye. Whereupon I heard the shifting of a floor-bolt, and both doors were swung open.

Need I say that facing me stood the woman whom we have agreed to call Mademoiselle Jezebel?

She said to me: "Well, M. Armand?"

"Madame Thevenet!" cried I. "She is still alive?"

"She is alive," replied my companion, looking up at me from under the lids of her greenish eyes. "But she is completely paralyzed."

I have never denied, Maurice, that Mlle. Jezebel has a certain attractiveness. She is not old or even middle-aged. Were it not that her complexion is as muddy as was the sky above us then, she would have been pretty.

"And as for Claudine," I said to her, "the daughter of madame—"

"You have come too late, M. Armand."

And well I remember that at this moment there rose up, in the mournful street outside, the tinkle of the banjo played by the street-musician.

It moved closer, playing a popular catch whose words run something thus:

Oh, I come from Alabama
With a banjo on my knee ;
I depart for Louisiana
My Susannah for to see.

Across the lips of mademoiselle flashed a smile of peculiar quality, like a razor-cut before the blood comes.

" Gold," she whispered. " Ninety thousand persons, one hears, have gone to seek it. Go to California, M. Armand. It is the only place you will find gold."

This tune, they say, is a merry tune. It did not seem so, as the dreary twanging faded away. Mlle. Jezebel, with her muddy blonde hair parted in the middle and drawn over her ears after the best fashion, faced me implacably. Her greenish eyes were wide open. Her old brown taffeta dress, full at the bust, narrow at the waist, rustled its wide skirts as she glided a step forward.

" Have the kindness," I said, " to stand aside. I wish to enter."

" You are no relative," she said. " I will not allow you."

" In that case, I regret, I must."

" If you had ever spoken one kind word to *me*," whispered mademoiselle, looking up from under her eyelids, " one gesture of love—that is to say, of affection—you might have shared five million francs."

" Stand aside, I say ! "

" As it is, you prefer a doll-faced consumptive at Paris. So be it ! "

I was raging, Maurice ; I confess it ; yet I drew myself up with coldness.

" You refer, perhaps to Claudine Thevenet ? "

" And to whom else ? "

" I might remind you, mademoiselle, that the lady is pledged to my good friend Lieutenant Delage. I have forgotten her."

" Have you ? " asked our Jezebel, with her eyes on my face and a strange hungry look in them. " Well, she will die. Unless you can solve a mystery."

" A mystery ? "

" I should not have said mystery, M. Armand. Because it is impossible of all solution. It is an Act of God ! "

Up to this time the glass-fronted doors of the vestibule had stood open behind her, against a darkness of closed shutters in the house. There breathed out of it an odour of unswept carpets, a sourness of stale living. Someone was approaching, carrying a lighted candle.

" Who speaks," called a man's voice ; shaky, but as French as Mlle. Jezebel's. " Who speaks concerning an Act of God ? "

I stepped across the threshold. Mademoiselle immediately

closed and locked the front doors. As the candle-glimmer moved still closer in gloom, I could have shouted for joy to see the man whom (as I correctly guessed) I had come to meet.

"You are M. Duroc, the lawyer!" I said. "You are my brother's friend!"

M. Duroc was a big, heavy man who seemed to sag in all his flesh. In compensation for his bald head, the greyish-brown moustache flowed down and parted into two hairy fans of beard on either side of his chin. He looked at me through oval gold-rimmed spectacles; in a friendly way, but yet frightened. His voice was deep and gruff, clipping the syllables, despite his fright.

"And you—" *clip-clip;* "you are Armand de Lafayette. I had expected you by the steam-packet today. Well! You are here. On a fool's errand, I regret."

"But why?" (And I shouted it at him, Maurice.)

I looked at mademoiselle, who was faintly smiling.

"M. Duroc!" I protested. "You wrote to my brother. You said you had persuaded madame to repent of her harshness towards her daughter!"

"Was that your duty?" asked the Jezebel, looking full at M. Duroc with her greenish eyes. "Was that your right?"

"I am a man of law," said M. Duroc. The deep monosyllables rapped, in ghostly bursts, through his parted beard. "I am correct. Very correct! And yet—"

"Who nursed her?" asked the Jezebel. "Who soothed her, fed her, calmed her tempers, endured her interminable abuse? *I* did!"

And yet, all the time she was speaking, this woman kept sidling and sliding against me, brushing my side, as though she would make sure of my presence there.

"Well!" said the lawyer. "It matters little now! This mystery . . ."

You may well believe that all these cryptic remarks, as well as reference to a mystery or an Act of God, had driven me almost frantic. I demanded to know what he meant.

"Last night," said M. Duroc, "a certain article disappeared."

"Well, well?"

"It disappeared," said M. Duroc, drawn up like a grenadier. "But it could not conceivably have disappeared. I myself swear this! Our only suggestions as to how it might have disappeared are a toy rabbit and a barometer."

"Sir," I said, "I do not wish to be discourteous. But—"

"Am I mad, you ask?"

I bowed. If any man can manage at once to look sagging and uncertain, yet stately and dignified, M. Duroc managed it then. And dignity won, I think.

"Sir," he replied, gesturing with the candle towards the rear of the house, "Madame Thevenet lies there. She is paralyzed. She can move only her eyes or partially the lips, without speech. Do you wish to see her?"

"If I am permitted."

"Yes. That would be correct. Accompany me."

And I saw the poor old woman, Maurice. Call her harridan if you like.

It was a square room of good size, whose shutters had remained closed and locked for years. Can one smell rust? In that room, with faded green wall-paper, I felt I could.

One solitary candle did little more than dispel shadow. It burned atop the mantelpiece well opposite the foot of the bed; and a shaggy man, whom I afterwards learned to be a police-officer, sat in a green-upholstered arm-chair by an unlighted coal fire in the fireplace grate, picking his teeth with a knife.

"If you please, Dr. Harding!" M. Duroc called softly in English.

The long and lean American doctor, who had been bending over the bed so as to conceal from our sight the head and shoulders of Madame Thevenet, turned round. But this cadaverous body—in such fashion were madame's head and shoulders propped up against pillows—his cadaverous body, I say, still concealed her face.

"Has there been any change?" persisted M. Duroc in English.

"There has been no change," replied the dark-complexioned Dr. Harding, "except for the worse."

"Do you want her to be moved?"

"There has never been any necessity," said the physician. "However, if you want to learn anything more about the toy rabbit or the barometer, I should hurry. The lady will die in a matter of hours, probably less."

And he stood to one side.

It was a heavy bed with four posts and a canopy. The bed-curtains, of some dullish-green material, were closely drawn on every side except the long side by which we saw Madame Thevenet in profile. Lean as a post, rigid, the strings of her cotton nightcap tightly tied under her chin, Madame Thevenet lay propped up there. But one eye rolled towards us, and it rolled horribly.

Up to this time the woman we call the Jezebel had said little. She chose this moment again to come brushing against my side. Her greenish eyes, lids half-closed, shone in the light of M. Duroc's candle. What she whispered was: "You don't really hate me, do you?"

Maurice, I make a pause here.

Since I wrote the sentence, I put down my pen, and pressed my hands over my eyes, and once more I thought. But let me try again.

I spent just two hours in the bedroom of Madame Thevenet. At the end of the time—oh, you shall hear why !—I rushed out of that bedroom, and out of number 23 Thomas Street, like the maniac I was.

The streets were full of people, of carriages, of omnibuses, at early evening. Knowing no place of refuge save the saloon from which I had come, I gave its address to a cab-driver. Since still I had swallowed no food, I may have been light-headed. Yet I wished to pour out my heart to the friends who had bidden me return there. And where were they now ?

A new group, all new, lounged against the bar-counter under brighter gaslight and brighter paint. Of all those who smote me on the back and cheered, none remained save the ancient giant who had implied friendship with General Washington. *He*, alas, lay helplessly drunk with his head near a sawdust spitting-box. He alone remained.

Wait, there was another !

I do not believe he had remained there because of me. Yet M. Thaddeus Perley, still sitting alone at the little table by the pillar, with the open gas-jet above, stared vacantly at the empty glass in his hand.

He had named himself a foreigner ; he was probably French. That was as well. For, as I lurched against the table, I was befuddled and all English had fled my wits.

" Sir," said I, " will you permit a madman to share your table ? "

M. Perley gave a great start, as though roused out of thought. He was now sober : this I saw. Indeed, his shiver and his haggard face were due to lack of stimulant rather than too much of it.

" Sir," he stammered, getting to his feet, " I shall be—I shall be honoured by your company." Automatically he opened his mouth to call for a waiter ; his hand went to his pocket.

" No, no, no ! " said I. " If you insist, M. Perley, you may pay for the second bottle. The first is mine. I am sick at heart, and I would speak with a gentleman."

At these last words M. Perley's whole expression changed. He sat down, and gave me a grave courtly nod. His eyes, which were his most expressive feature, studied my face and my disarray.

" You are ill, M. de Lafayette," he said. " Have you so soon come to grief in this—this *civilized* country ? "

" I have come to grief, yes. But not through civilization or the lack of it." And I banged my fist on the table. " I have come to grief, M. Perley, through miracles or magic. I have come to grief with a problem which no man's ingenuity can solve ! "

Someone had brought a bottle of brandy, with its accessories. M. Perley's trembling hand slopped a generous allowance into my glass, and an even more generous one into his own.

"That is very curious," he remarked, eyeing the glass. "A murder, was it?"

"No. But a valuable document has disappeared. The most thorough search by the police cannot find it."

Touch him anywhere, and he flinched. M. Perley, for some extraordinary reason, appeared to think I was mocking him.

"A document, you say?" His laugh was a trifle unearthly. "Come, now. Was it by any chance—a letter?"

"No, no! It was a will. Three large sheets of parchment, of the size you call foolscap. Listen!"

And as M. Perley added water to his brandy and gulped down about a third of it, I leaned across the table.

"Madame Thevenet, of whom you may have heard me speak in this café, was an invalid. But (until the early hours of this morning) she was not bed-ridden. She could move, and walk about her room, and so on. She had been lured away from Paris and her family by a green-eyed woman named the Jezebel.

"But a kindly lawyer of this city, M. Duroc, believed that madame suffered and had a bad conscience about her own daughter. Last night, despite the Jezebel, he persuaded madame at last to sign a will leaving all her money to this daughter.

"And the daughter, Claudine, is in mortal need of it! From my brother and myself, who have more than enough, she will not accept a sou. Her affianced, Lieutenant Delage, is as poor as she. But, unless she leaves France for Switzerland, she will die. I will not conceal from you that Claudine suffers from that dread disease we politely call consumption."

M. Perley stopped with his glass again half-way to his mouth.

He believed me now; I sensed it. Yet under the dark hair, tumbled on his forehead, his face had gone as white as his neat, mended shirt-frill.

"So very little a thing is money!" he whispered. "So very little a thing!"

And he lifted the glass and drained it.

"You do not think I am mocking you, sir?"

"No, no!" says M. Perley, shading his eyes with one hand. "I knew myself of one such case. She is dead. Pray continue."

"Last night, I repeat, Madame Thevenet changed her mind. When M. Duroc paid his weekly evening visit with the news that I should arrive today, madame fairly chattered with eagerness and a kind of terror. Death was approaching, she said; she had a presentiment."

As I spoke, Maurice, there returned to me the image of that shadowy, arsenic-green bedroom in the shuttered house.

" Madame," I continued, " cried out to M. Duroc that he must bolt the bedroom door. She feared the Jezebel, who lurked but said nothing. M. Duroc drew up to her bedside a portable writing-desk, with two good candles. For a long time madame spoke, pouring out contrition, self-abasement, the story of an unhappy marriage, all of which M. Duroc was obliged to write down until it covered three large parchment sheets.

" But it was done, M. Perley !

" The will left everything to her daughter, Claudine. It revoked a previous will by which all had been left (and this can be done in French law, as we both know) to Jezebel of the muddy complexion and the muddy yellow hair.

" Well, then ! . . .

" M. Duroc sallies out into the street, where he finds two sober fellows who come in. Madame signs the will, M. Duroc sands it, and the two men from the street affix their signatures as witnesses. Then *they* are gone. M. Duroc folds the will lengthways, and prepares to put it into his carpet-bag.

" ' No, no, no ! ' cries madame, with the shadow of her peaked nightcap wagging on the locked shutters beyond. ' I wish to keep it—for this one night ! I wish to read it once, twice, a thousand times ! M. Duroc, what time is it ? '

" Whereupon he takes out his gold repeater, and opens it. To his astonishment it is one o'clock in the morning. Yet he touches the spring of the repeater, and its pulse-beat rings one.

" ' M. Duroc,' pleads Madame Thevenet, ' remain here with me for the rest of the night ! '

" ' Madame ! ' cries M. Duroc, shocked to the very fans of his beard. ' That would not be correct.'

" ' Yes, you are right,' says madame. And never, swears the lawyer, has he seen her less bleary of eye, more alive with wit and cunning, more the great lady of ruin, than there in that green and shadowy and foul-smelling room.

" Yet this very fact puts her in more and more terror of the Jezebel, who is never seen. She points to M. Duroc's carpet-bag.

" ' I think you have much work to do, dear sir ? '

" M. Duroc groaned. ' The Good Lord knows that I have ! '

" ' Outside the only door of this room,' says madame, ' there is a small dressing-room. Set up your writing-desk beside the door there, so that no one may enter without your knowledge. Do your work there. Do it,' shrieks madame, ' for the sake of Claudine and for the sake of an old friendship ! '

" Very naturally, M. Duroc hesitated.

" ' *She* will be hovering,' pleads Madame Thevenet, pressing the will against her breast. ' *This* I shall read and read and read, and sanctify with my tears. If I find I am falling asleep,' and here the old lady looked cunning, ' I shall hide it. But no matter ! Even *she* cannot penetrate through locked shutters and a guarded door.'

" Well, in fine, the lawyer at length yielded.

" He set up his writing-desk against the very doorpost outside that door. When he last saw madame, before closing the door, he saw her in profile with the green bed-curtains drawn except on that side, propped up with a tall candle burning on a table at her right hand.

" Ah, that night ! I think I see M. Duroc at his writing-desk, in an airless dressing-room where no clock ticked. I see him, at times, removing his oval spectacles to press his smarting eyes. I see him returning to his legal papers, while his pen scratched through the wicked hours of the night.

" He heard nothing, or virtually nothing, until five o'clock in the morning. Then, which turned him cold and flabby, he heard a cry which he describes as being like that of a deaf-mute.

" The communicating door had not been bolted on Madame Thevenet's side, in case she needed help. M. Duroc rushed into the other room.

" On the table, at madame's right hand, the tall candle had burnt down to a flattish mass of wax over which still hovered a faint bluish flame. Madame herself lay rigid in her peaked nightcap. That revival of spirit last night, or remorse in her bitter heart, had brought on the last paralysis. Though M. Duroc tried to question her, she could move only her eyes.

" Then M. Duroc noticed that the will, which she had clutched as a doomed religious might clutch a crucifix, was not in her hand or on the bed.

" ' Where is the will ? ' he shouted at her, as though she were deaf too. ' Where is the will ? '

" Madame Thevenet's eyes fixed on him. Then they moved down, and looked steadily at a trumpery toy—a rabbit, perhaps four inches high, made of pink velours or the like—which lay on the bed. Again she looked at M. Duroc, as though to emphasize this. Then her eyes rolled, this time with dreadful effort, towards a large barometer, shaped like a warming-pan, which hung on the wall beside the door. Three times she did this before the bluish candle-flame flickered and went out."

And I, Armand de Lafayette, paused here in my recital to M. Perley.

Again I became aware that I was seated in a garish saloon, swilling brandy, amid loud talk that beat the air. There was a thumping noise from the theatre above our heads, and faint strains of music.

" The will," I said, " was not stolen. Not even the Jezebel could have melted through locked shutters or a guarded door. The will was not hidden, because no inch of the room remains unsearched. *Yet the will is gone !* "

I threw a glance across the table at M. Perley.

He was a little flushed. That slightly wild look, which I had observed before, had crept up especially into one eye, giving his whole face a somewhat lop-sided appearance. Yet all his self-confidence had returned. He gave me a little crooked smile.

" What song the Sirens sang," he said to me, " or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, although puzzling questions, are not beyond *all* conjecture."

" They are beyond *my* conjecture ! " I cried. " And so is this ! "

M. Perley extended his hand, spread the fingers, and examined them as one who owns the universe.

" It is some little time," he remarked, " since I have concerned myself with these trifles." His eyes retreated into a dream. " Yet I have given some trifling aid, in the past, to the Prefect of the Parisian police."

" You are a Frenchman ! I knew it ! And the police ? " Seeing his lofty look, I added : " As an amateur, understood ? "

" Understood ! " Then his delicate hand—it would be unjust to call it claw-like—shot across the table and fastened on my arm. The strange eyes burned towards my face. " A little more detail ! " he pleaded humbly. " A little more, I beg of you ! This woman, for instance, you call the Jezebel ? "

" It was she who met me at the house."

" And then ? "

I described for him my meeting with the Jezebel, with M. Duroc, and our entrance to the sick-room, where the shaggy police-officer sat in the arm-chair and the saturnine doctor faced us from beside the bed.

" This woman," I exclaimed, " seems to have conceived for me (forgive me) a kind of passion. No doubt it was due to some idle compliments I once paid her at Paris.

" As I have explained, the Jezebel is *not* unattractive, even if she would only (again forgive me) wash her hair. Nevertheless, when once more she brushed my side and whispered, ' You don't really hate me, do you ? ' I felt little less than horror. It seemed to me that in some fashion I was responsible for the whole tragedy.

" While we stood beside the bed, M. Duroc the lawyer poured

out the story I have recounted. There lay the poor paralytic, and confirmed it with her eyes. The toy rabbit, a detestable pink colour, lay in its same position on the bed. Behind me, hung against the wall by the door, was the large barometer.

" Apparently for my benefit, Madame Thevenet again went through her dumb-show with imploring eyes. She would look at the rabbit ; next (as M. Duroc had not mentioned), she would roll her eyes all round her, for some desperate yet impenetrable reason before fixing her gaze on the barometer.

" It meant . . . what ?

" The lawyer spoke then. ' More light ! ' gulped out M. Duroc. ' If you must have closed shutters and windows, then let us at least have more light ! '

" The Jezebel glided out to fetch candles. During M. Duroc's explanation he had several times mentioned my name. At first mention of it the shaggy police-officer jumped and put away his clasp-knife. He beckoned to the physician, Dr. Harding, who went over for a whispered conference.

" Whereupon the police-officer sprang up.

" ' Mr. Lafayette ! ' And he swung my hand pompously. ' If I'd known it was you, Mr. Lafayette, I wouldn't 'a' sat there like a bump on a log.'

" ' You are an officer of police, sir,' said I. ' Can *you* think of no explanation ? '

" He shook his head.

" ' These people are Frenchies, Mr. Lafayette, and you're an American,' he said, with somewhat conspicuous lack of logic. ' *If* they're telling the truth—'

" ' Let us assume that ! '

" ' I can't tell you where the old lady's will is,' he stated positively. ' But I can tell you where it ain't. It ain't hidden in this room ! '

" ' But surely . . . ! ' I began in despair.

" At this moment the Jezebel, her brown taffeta dress rustling, glided back into the room with a handful of candles and a tin box of the new-style Lucifer matches. She lighted several candles, sticking them on any surface in their own grease.

" There were one or two fine pieces of furniture ; but the mottled-marble tops were chipped and stained, the gilt sides cracked. There were a few mirrors, creating mimic spectral life. I saw a little more clearly the faded green paper of the walls, and what I perceived to be the partly open door of a cupboard. The floor was of bare boards.

" All this while I was conscious of two pairs of eyes : the imploring gaze of Madame Thevenet, and the amorous gaze of the Jezebel.

"'Mr. Duroc here,' said the shaggy police-officer, clapping the distressed advocate on the shoulder, 'sent a messenger in a cab at half-past five this morning. And what time did we get here? I ask you and I tell you! Six o'clock!'

"Then he shook his finger at me in a kind of pride and fury of efficiency.

"'Why, Mr. Lafayette, there's been fourteen men at this room from six this morning until just before you got here!'

"'To search for Madame Thevenet's will, you mean?'

"The shaggy man nodded portentously, and folded his arms.

"'Floor's solid.' He stamped on the bare boards. 'Walls and ceiling? Nary a inch missed. We reckon we're reasonable smart; and we are.'

"'But Madame Thevenet,' I persisted, 'was not a complete invalid until this morning. She could move about. If she became afraid of'—the name of the Jezebel choked me—'if she became afraid, and *did* hide the will . . .'

"'Where'd she hide it? Tell me!'

"'In the furniture, then?'

"'Cabinet-makers in, Mr. Lafayette. No secret compartments.'

"'In one of the mirrors?'

"'Took the backs of 'em off. No will hid there.'

"'Up the chimney!' I cried.

"'Sent a chimney-sweep up there,' replied my companion in a ruminating way. Each time I guessed, he would leer at me in friendly and complacent challenge. 'Ye-es, I reckon we're pretty smart. But we didn't find no will.'

"The pink rabbit also seemed to leer from the bed. I saw madame's eyes. Once again, as a desperate mind will fasten on trifles, I observed the strings of the nightcap beneath her scrawny chin. But I looked again at the toy rabbit.

"'Has it occurred to you,' I said triumphantly, 'to examine the bed and bedstead of Madame Thevenet herself?'

"My shaggy friend went to her bedside.

"'Poor old woman,' he said. He spoke as though she were already a corpse. Then he turned round. 'We lifted her out, just as gentle as a new-born babe (didn't we ma'am?). No hollow bed-posts! Nothing in the canopy! Nothing in the frame or the feather-beds or the curtains or the bedclothes!'

"Suddenly the shaggy police-officer became angry, as though he wished to be rid of the whole matter.

"'And it ain't in the toy rabbit,' he said, 'because you can see we slit it up, if you look close. And it ain't in that barometer there. It just—ain't here.'

" There was a silence as heavy as the dusty, hot air of this room.

" ' It is here,' murmured M. Duroc in his gruff voice. ' It must be here ! '

" The Jezebel stood there meekly, with downcast eyes.

" And I, in my turn, confess that *I* lost my head. I stalked over to the barometer, and tapped it. Its needle, which already indicated, ' Rain ; cold,' moved still further towards that point.

" I was not insane enough to hit it with my fist. But I crawled on the floor, in search of a secret hiding-place. I felt along the wall.

" What at length gave me pause was the cupboard, already thoroughly searched. In the cupboard hung a few withered dresses and gowns, as though they had shrivelled with Madame Thevenet's body. But on the shelf of the cupboard . . .

" On the shelf stood a great number of perfume-bottles : even today, I fear, many of our countrymen think perfume a substitute for water and soap ; and the state of madame's hands would have confirmed this. *But*, on the shelf, were a few dusty novels. There was a crumpled and begrimed copy of yesterday's New York *Sun*. This newspaper did not contain a will ; but it did contain a black beetle, which ran out across my hand.

" I flung down the beetle and stamped on it. I closed the cupboard door, acknowledging defeat. Madame Thevenet's will was gone. And at the same second, in that dim green room—still badly lighted, with only a few more candles—two voices cried out.

" One was my own voice :

" ' *In God's name, where is it ?* '

" The other was the deep voice of M. Duroc :

" ' *Look at that woman ! She knows !* '

" And he meant the Jezebel.

" M. Duroc, with his beard-fans a-tremble, was pointing to a mirror ; a little blurred, as these mirrors were. Our Jezebel had been looking into the mirror, her back turned to us. Now she dodged, as at a stone thrown.

" With good poise our Jezebel writhed this movement into a curtsy, turning to face us. But not before I also had seen that smile—like a razor-cut before the blood comes—as well as full knowledge, mocking knowledge, shining out of wide-open eyes in the mirror.

" ' You spoke to me, M. Duroc ? ' She murmured the reply, also in French.

" ' Listen to me ! ' the lawyer said formally. ' This will is *not* missing. It is in this room. You were not here last night. Something has made you guess. You know where it is.'

"'Are you unable to find it?' asked the Jezebel in surprise.

"'Stand back, young man!' M. Duroc said to me. 'I ask you something, mademoiselle, in the name of justice.'

"'Ask!' said the Jezebel.

"'If Claudine Thevenet inherits the money to which she is entitled, you will be well paid; yes, overpaid! You know Claudine. You know that!'

"'I know it.'

"'But if the new will be *not* found,' said M. Duroc, again waving me back, 'then you inherit everything. And Claudine will die. For it will be assumed—'

"'Yes!' said the Jezebel, with one hand pressed against her breast. 'You yourself, M. Duroc, testify that all night a candle was burning at Madame's bedside. Well! The poor woman, whom *I* loved and cherished, repented of her ingratitude towards me. She burnt this new will at the candle-flame; she crushed its ashes to powder and blew them away!'

"'Is that true?' cried M. Duroc.

"'They will assume it,' smiled the Jezebel, 'as you say.' She looked at me. 'And for you, M. Armand!'

"She glided closer. I can only say that I saw her eyes uncovered; or, if you wish to put it so, her soul and flesh together.

"'I would give you everything on earth,' she said. 'I will not give you the doll-face in Paris.'

"'Listen to me!' I said to her, so agitated that I seized her shoulders. "You are out of your senses! You cannot give Claudine to me! She will marry another man!'

"'And do you think that matters to me,' asked the Jezebel, with her green eyes full on mine, 'as long as you still love her?'

"There was a small crash as someone dropped a knife on the floor.

"We three, I think, had completely forgotten that we were not alone.

"The saturnine Dr. Harding now occupied the green arm-chair. His long thin legs, in tight black trousers with strap under the boot-instep, were crossed and looked spidery; his high beaver hat glimmered on his head. The police-officer, who was picking his teeth with a knife when I first saw him, had now dropped the knife when he tried to trim his nails.

"But both men sensed the atmosphere. Both were alert, feeling out with the tentacles of their nerves. The police-officer shouted at me.

"'What's a-gitting into your head?' he said.

"Grotesquely, it was that word 'head' which gave me my inspiration.

" ' The nightcap ! ' I exclaimed in English.

" ' What nightcap ? '

" For the nightcap of Madame Thevenet had a peak ; it was large ; it was tightly tied under the chin ; it might well conceal a flat-pressed document. The police-officer, dull-witted as he appeared, grasped the meaning in a flash. And how I wished I had never spoken ! For the fellow meant well, but he was not gentle.

" As I raced round the curtained sides of the bed, the police-officer was holding a candle in one hand and tearing off madame's nightcap with the other. He found no will there ; only straggly wisps of hair on a skull grown old before its time.

" Madame Thevenet had been a great lady, once. It must have been the last humiliation. Two tears overflowed her eyes and ran down her cheeks. She lay propped up there in a nearly sitting position ; but something seemed to wrench inside her.

" And she closed her eyes forever. And the Jezebel laughed.

" That is the end of my story. That is why I rushed out of the house like a madman. The will has vanished as though by magic ; or is it still there by magic ? "

For a little time after I had finished my narrative to M. Perley in the saloon, it seemed to me that the bar-counter was a trifle quieter. But a faint stamping continued from the theatre above our heads. Then all was hushed, until a chorus rose to a tinkle of many banjos :

Oh, I come from Alabama
With my banjo on my knee
I depart for Louisiana . . .

Enough ! The song died away, and M. Thaddeus Perley did not even hear it.

M. Perley sat looking downwards into an empty glass, so that I could not see his face.

" Sir," he remarked almost bitterly, " you are a man of good heart. I am glad to be of service in a problem so trifling as this."

" *Trifling !* "

His voice was a little husky, but not slurred. His hand slowly turned the glass round and round.

" Will you permit two questions ? " asked M. Perley.

" Two questions ? Ten thousand ! "

" More than two will be unnecessary." Still M. Perley did not look up. " This toy rabbit, of which so much was made : I would know its exact position on the bed ? "

" It was almost at the foot of the bed, and about the middle in a crossways direction."

" Ah, so I had imagined. Were the three sheets of parchment, forming the will, written upon two sides or upon only one ? "

" I had not told you, M. Perley. But M. Duroc said : upon one side only."

M. Perley raised his head.

His face was now flushed and distorted with drink, his eye grown wild. In his cups he was as proud as Satan, and as disdainful of others' intelligence ; yet he spoke with dignity, and with careful clearness.

" It is ironic, M. de Lafayette, that I should tell you how to lay your hand on the missing will and the elusive money ; since, upon my word, I have never been able to perform a like service for myself." And he smiled as at some secret joke. " Perhaps," he added, " it is the very simplicity of the thing which puts you at fault."

" You mock me, sir ! I will not . . ."

" Take me as I am," said M. Perley, whacking the foot of the glass on the table, " or leave me. Besides," here his wandering eye encountered a list of steam-sailings pasted against the wall, " I—I leave tomorrow by the *Parnassus* for England, and then for France."

" I meant no offence, M. Perley ! If you have knowledge, speak ! "

" Madame Thevenet," he said, carefully pouring himself more brandy, "hid the will in the middle of the night. Does it puzzle you that she took such precaution to hide the will ? But the element of the outré must always betray itself. The Jezebel *must not* find that will ! Yet Madame Thevenet trusted nobody—not even the worthy physician who attended her. If Madame were to die of a stroke, the police would be there and must soon, she was sure, discover her simple device. Even if she were paralyzed, it would ensure the presence of other persons in the room to act as unwitting guards.

" Your cardinal error," M. Perley continued dispassionately, " was one of ratiocination. You tell me that Madame Thevenet, to give you a hint, looked fixedly at some point near the foot of the bed. Why do you assume that she was looking at the toy rabbit ? "

" Because," I replied hotly, " the toy rabbit was the only object she could have looked at ! "

" Pardon me ; but it was *not*. You several times informed me that the bed-curtains were closely drawn together on three sides. They were drawn on all but the ' long ' side towards the door. Therefore the ideal reasoner, without having seen the room, may safely say that the curtains were drawn together at the foot of the bed ? "

"Yes, true!"

"After looking fixedly at this point represented by the toy, Madame Thevenet then 'rolls her eyes all round her'—in your phrase. May we assume that she wishes the curtains to be drawn back, so that she may see something *beyond* the bed?"

"It is—possible, yes!"

"It is more than possible, as I shall demonstrate. Let us direct our attention, briefly, to the incongruous phenomenon of the barometer on another wall. The barometer indicates, 'Rain; cold.'"

Here M. Perley's thin shoulders drew together under the old military cloak.

"Well," he said, "the cold is on its way. Yet this day, for April, has been warm outside and indoors, oppressively hot?"

"Yes! Of course!"

"You yourself," continued M. Perley, inspecting his finger-nails, "told me what was directly opposite the foot of the bed. Let us suppose that the bed-curtains are drawn open. Madame Thevenet, in her nearly seated position, is looking *downwards*. What would she have seen?"

"The fireplace!" I cried. "The grate of the fireplace!"

"Already we have a link with the weather. And what, as you have specifically informed me, was in the grate of the fireplace?"

"An unlighted coal fire!"

"Exactly. And what is essential for the composition of such a fire? We need coal; we need wood; but primarily and above all, we need . . ."

"*Paper!*" I cried.

"In the cupboard of that room," said M. Perley, with his disdainful little smile, "was a very crumpled and begrimed (mark that; not dusty) copy of *yesterday*'s New York *Sun*. To light fires is the most common, and indeed the best, use for our daily press. That copy had been used to build yesterday's fire. But something else, during the night, was substituted for it. You yourself remarked the extraordinary dirty state of Madame Thevenet's hands."

M. Perley swallowed the brandy, and his flush deepened.

"Sir," he said loudly, "you will find the will crumpled up, with ends most obviously protruding, under the coal and wood in the fireplace grate. Even had anyone taken the fire to pieces, he would have found only what appeared to be dirty blank paper, written side undermost, which could never be a valuable will. It was too self-evident to be seen—now go!"

"Go?" I echoed stupidly.

M. Perley rose from his chair.

" Go, I say ! " he shouted. " The Jezebel could not light that fire. It was too warm for one thing ; and all day there were police-officers with instructions that an outsider must touch nothing. But now ? *Madame Thevenet kept warning you that the fire must not be lighted, or the will would be destroyed !* "

" Will you await me here ? " I called over my shoulder.

" Yes, yes ! And perhaps there will be peace for the wretched girl with—with the lung trouble."

Even as I ran out of the door I saw him, grotesque and pitiful, slump across the table. Hope, rising and surging, seemed to sweep me along like the crack of the cabman's whip. But when I reached my destination, hope receded.

The shaggy police-officer was just descending the front steps.

" None of us coming back here, Mr. Lafayette ! " he called cheerily. " Old Mrs. What's-her-name went and burnt that will at a candle last night."

The front door was unlocked. I raced through that dark house, and burst into the rear bedroom.

The corpse still lay in the big, gloomy bed. Every candle had flickered almost down to its socket. The police-officer's clasp-knife still lay on bare boards. But the Jezebel was there.

She knelt on the hearth, with the tin box of Lucifer matches she had brought there earlier. The match spurted a bluish fire.

" A Lucifer," I said, " in the hand of a Jezebel ! "

And I struck her away from the grate, so that she reeled against a chair and fell. Large coals, small coals rattled down in puffs of dust as I plunged my hands into the unlighted fire. Little sticks, sawed sticks ; and I found it there : crumpled parchment-sheets, but incontestibly madame's will.

" M. Duroc ! " I called. " M. Duroc ! "

You and I, my brother Maurice, have fought the Citizen-King with bayonets as we now fight the upstart Bonapartist ; we need not be ashamed of tears. I confess, then, that the tears overran my eyes and blinded me. I scarcely saw M. Duroc as he hurried into the room.

Certainly I did not see the Jezebel stealthily pick up the police-officer's knife. I noticed nothing at all until she flew at me, and stabbed me in the back.

Peace, my brother : I have assured you all is well. At that time, faith, I was not much conscious of any hurt. I bade M. Duroc, who was trembling, to wrench out the knife ; I borrowed his roomy greatcoat to hide the blood ; I must hurry, hurry, hurry back to that little table under the gas-jet.

I planned it all on my way back. M. Perley, apparently a stranger in this country, disliked it and was evidently very poor even in France. But *we* are not precisely paupers. Even with his intense pride, he could not refuse (for such a service) a sum which would comfort him for the rest of his life.

Back I plunged into the saloon, and hurried down it. But the little round table by the pillar, under the flaring gas-jet, was empty.

How long I stood there I cannot tell. The back of my shirt, which at first had seemed full of blood, now stuck to the borrowed greatcoat. All of a sudden I caught sight of the fat-faced bartender with the gold teeth. He came out from behind the bar-counter to greet me.

"Where is the gentleman who was sitting at that table?"

I pointed to it.

"Don't you worry about that, monseer!" said he reassuringly. "*That's* been 'tended to! We threw the drunken tramp out of here!"

"You threw . . ."

"Right bang in the gutter. Had to crawl along in it before he could stand up." My bartender's face was pleased and vicious. "Ordered a bottle of best brandy, and couldn't pay for it." The face changed again. "Goddelmighty, monseer, what's wrong?"

"*I* ordered that brandy."

"*He* didn't say so, when the waiter brought me over. Just looked me up and down, crazy-like, and said a gentleman would give his I.O.U. Gentleman!"

"M. Perley," I said, restraining an impulse to kill that bartender, "is a friend of mine. He departs for France early tomorrow morning. Where can I find him?"

"Perley!" sneered my companion. "That ain't even his real name, I hearn tell. Gits high-and-mighty ideas from upper Broadway. But his real name's on the I.O.U."

"Did you keep that I.O.U.?"

"Yes, I kepp it," growled the bartender, fishing in his pocket. "God knows why, but I kepp it."

And at last, Maurice, I triumphed!

True, I collapsed from my wound; and the fever would not let me remember that I must be at the dock when the *Parnassus* steam-packet departed from New York next morning. I must remain here, shut up in a hotel-room and unable to sleep at night, until I can take ship for home. But where I failed, you can succeed. He was to leave on the morrow by the *Parnassus* for England, and then for France—so he told me. You can find him—in six months at the

most. In six months, I give my word, he will be out of misery forever!

"*I.O.U.*," reads the little slip, "*for one bottle of your best brandy, forty-five cents. Signed: Edgar A. Poe.*"

I remain, Maurice, your affectionate brother,

Armand

★*We hope, of course, that this magnificent ending came to our readers with a thunderclap of surprise! And yet those who deduced the identity of Thaddeus Perley will know how lavishly the author has spread his clues. First the date, April, 1849: six months before the death of Edgar Allan Poe. Then the detailed portrait of the man,—and Perley's statement that he had given aid to the Parisian police, a reference, of course, to M. G. in "The Purloined Letter." And finally the name itself; Edgar Allan Poe actually* had *been known to use the name of Thaddeus Perley!*

Readers will agree that it is on John Dickson Carr, this master of the gruesome, that the mantle of Poe's genius seems now to have fallen. "If there's one thing I can't stand," he says, "it's a nice healthy *murder . . ." For atmosphere he works in an attic—which once he seriously considered stocking with bats—and promptly at eight each morning, Sundays included, he climbs aloft with a large percolator of coffee and begins to fight his way out of incredible—and mostly frightful —situations.*

During his seventeen years in England he spent frequent holidays on Dartmoor where he helped along an already terrifying sense of the macabre by staring at the prison!

These surprising methods apparently work, for so prolific is his output that he has split his creative self into two, John Dickson Carr on the one hand, and Carter Dickson on the other.

It was Carter Dickson, of course, who created unwieldily rotund, bald and villainously picturesque detective Sir Henry Merrivale. And Argosy readers will soon be watching Sir Henry at work once more, this time tracking down an elusive new criminal, a superman who invariably carries to the scene of the crime an immense iron chest, and then disappears miraculously, iron chest and all!

And who is "Iron Chest"? Only Sir Henry knows. But readers will have a chance of trying their hand at the problem next month when the first part of BEHIND THE CRIMSON BLIND appears in Argosy.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

"Well, Wiggy," I said as we left, "you could have bought the place"

by CHARLES CAUSLEY

WHENEVER I start to talk about Malta, people always ask me if I've been down the Gut. Well, I haven't. In fact I've never even been to Valletta. We anchored at a little place called Magda Laria, which I was astounded to find when I looked at an enlarged map of Malta the other day is in the north-west of the island. I always thought it was in the east, and that we had approached Malta from the south. But then, we matelots didn't know where we were half the time during the war.

Magda Laria didn't seem much of a place. It looks, I can remember thinking, like a backcloth painted for a third-rate tour of *The Desert Song*. You know: forts, *Beau Geste*, everything a yellow, biscuit colour, with great slices like cheese cut out of the bombed buildings. Piles of rubble buttering the jetty. Yes, that was it: biscuits and cheese and butter. And, between the ship and the shore, the clear blue enamel of the sea (it was June) that somehow became glass clear when you looked down at it. You could see the harbour bed, much nearer than it really was, salmon-tins, wrecks, and little bursts of tiny bright-coloured fish exploding all over the place like underwater fireworks.

They warned us against going ashore, too, and put on a tombola session on the flight-deck to keep us on board. But I'd heard that one before: they'd said the same thing when we anchored for the night at the Island of Arran on the Firth of Clyde, where I drank the coolest beer in the British Isles and finished up dancing *The Dashing White Sergeant* in the village hall. So Wiggy and I were not deterred by warnings of the poverty of entertainment ashore. Besides, I had never been on a run with Wiggy and I wanted to find out what sort of a bloke he was.

Wiggy Bennett was a Canadian P.O. Telegraphist: a wireless-operator. I used to like talking to Wiggy, not precisely for what he said, but for the sound of his voice. It gave me a drugged feeling, as though I were in the pictures and buckets of treacle were being poured over me. We were in the aircraft-carrier *Knight Templar*

at the time and we had arrived in Malta for six weeks' flying-off trials, on our way to Sydney and the Pacific.

And I was tremendously interested in Wiggy's reputation as a singer. The lads in the mess said that he had sung at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. And at the Massey Hall in Toronto. And that he'd have been at Covent Garden if it hadn't been for the war.

Wiggy certainly looked the part. He was a tall, hefty Canuck, a bit pale and inclined to run to fat. He looked a bit like Lawrence Tibbett, or it might have been Melchior : I forget which. Anyway I'm sure it was that, more than anything, that gave me the idea.

I was fed up with playing with five-piece fit-ups for three-and-sixpenny hops in Manchester and Liverpool. It was a killing life. And, in those days, I wasn't a bad pianist and I took care to let the right people know it. So I determined to become Wiggy's accompanist after the war. Vienna, Paris, New York, Belgrade, London. Yes : it must have been that Lawrence Tibbett look, because I had never heard Wiggy sing except one day when he was dhobying a shirt in the P.O.'s bathroom. But then, pussers' bathrooms are always tinny and hollow and most people's voices sound good in them. It was really nothing to go by.

I made up my mind to hear Wiggy sing properly at the first opportunity.

" Well, Jan," said Wiggy (everybody called me Jan, for although I'd worked for years in the North, I'd been born at Launceston in Cornwall), " what's the buzz ? "

" Big eats, Wiggy," I said, " then I want to hear you sing." I hadn't told Wiggy I'd organized our future. We got a gharry at the jetty, driven by somebody out of *Pickwick Papers*.

" We want a hotel, big eats," I said, " and a piano. A good piano." I was anxious to impress Wiggy. The gharry-driver flicked up the horse and off we trotted along the sea-front. It was a lovely evening. The Mediterranean. I started to think about Shelley and Byron and Doctor Johnson. (Didn't he say that the only real purpose of travel was to get nearer the shores of the Mediterranean as quickly as possible ?) I began to think we should include Rome in our tour. Milan, certainly. I wondered if Wiggy could speak Italian.

The gharry drew up outside a battered building. " *The John Bull Hotel* " I read, in red and blue paint on a peeling white board. We seemed to be around the back : the front of the hotel (and it had an iron balcony with scarlet flowers creeping all over it) overhung the bay. There were green shutters and bead curtains and a lot of boxes of wine and straw being unloaded in the yard.

" 'Ere we are," said the gharry-driver, " De John Bull. Verra nice."

Wiggy stopped his interminable monologue about Canada. " Got your music ? " I said. Wiggy tapped his leather case and scrambled out.

The proprietor of the hotel wasn't a man, as I'd expected, but a woman. She looked to me like a Jewess, beautiful olive skin and black hair, one or two gold teeth. Salome's mother, I thought, about forty-five. Well preserved, but probably unconditional surrender to square meals any year now. And, as it turned out, she knew her stuff about running an hotel.

She led the way into the dining-room overlooking the bay. We were the only customers. Chiefly, I remember the jungle wallpaper, and a picture of King Edward VII at Biarritz. Also " A Present from Marseilles " picked out in sea-shells. And, in the corner of the room, the piano : a black upright.

I opened it, and my heart dropped. Yellow keys ; about six with the ivory torn right off, a rich rotting brown like a cut apple. I saw the name, *Steck*, and played a chord, quietly, nervously. She was a beauty.

" Steak, eggs and chips twice, and I like them chips a golden brown," Wiggy was saying. " Yessair," said Madame, backing out and falling over a gaggle of children with eyes like burning sloes, peering in at the door.

Now I know all about Malta in wartime : but they produced the best meal I'd had for years. I think they said the eggs were flown from Sicily. And there were cigars, and some bottles of marsala. Everything was going splendidly.

It was just getting dark. The ship had lit up across the bay and lay there : a huge sparkling water-beetle. Some people were swimming about in the sea below us. We could hear them splashing about and calling to one another. One or two church bells were clinking up in the village, along the sea-road.

" Now then, Wiggy," I said, opening the top of the piano, " what about it ? Let's have your music." Wiggy grinned and threw it across.

He had a terrific pile of stuff, mostly huge scores, all pencilled over and torn. On the face of each was stamped his name in huge letters : Richard Bartlett Bennett. I didn't know which to pick out first ; he had them all : *Tristan*, *The Magic Flute*, *Rigoletto*, *The Barber*, *Carmen*. Eventually I pulled out *Bohème*, opened it at " Your tiny hand," winked at Wiggy, played the introduction, and we were off.

Now I won't pretend that I didn't get the shock of my life.

I had expected Wiggy to be good ; but not as good as all that. His voice was the clearest, purest, easiest tenor I'd ever heard. All the great tenors I'd listened to, from the old Edison Bell records to broadcasts from Milan, sounded to me like a crowd of women. But Wiggy sang tenor like a man.

As for myself, I don't think I ever played better. I shall never forget it. It was like one's first bucket of champagne, the sight of Sydney bridge, the flowers in the Malabar Gardens at Bombay. Perfect. Vienna, Paris, Belgrade, London, I thought, here I come.

" Well? " said Wiggy, when he had finished. But before I had time to answer there was a great shout of applause. We looked round.

To my amazement the room was full of people. Madame, the black-eyed children, four or five gharry-drivers, the chef, two policemen, a bunch of soldiers, three Maltese firemen. Even the swimmers had crawled up the balcony and hung there, dripping and clapping. Everyone was cheering and applauding and slapping Wiggy on the back and bawling out " Bravissimo ! "

I was so surprised I couldn't help joining in myself. Wiggy was bowing and smiling in the manner born. I could almost see the footlights and the gold curtain at the Metropolitan.

After that, so to speak, the place was ours. Madame, assisted by the Maltese firemen, dragged in four cases of wine and everybody drank up all round. And Wiggy sang and sang. Bits of everything : *Il Seraglio*, *Lohengrin*, *The Mastersingers*. Even something from *Pelléas and Mélisande*.

He must have sung for about two or three hours. And instead of his voice becoming tired and strained, it got even richer and more golden.

The crowd nearly went mad with joy. And Madame actually wept when we had to go back on board. " Come back tomorrow ! All free ! " she cried, pressing eggs and cigarettes into Wiggy's hands. " Yes ! Yes ! " yelled everybody else, taking up the chorus, " All free ! "

They gave three cheers for the Navy, Wiggy led everybody in " God Save the King " and the gharry-driver wouldn't take anything for driving us back to the jetty.

" Well, Wiggy," I said, " you could have bought the place."

Wiggy didn't say anything, but just winked and went on trying to get his music back into his case.

So that was that. We never went back to the John Bull Hotel, though, and in fact I never saw Malta again. When I awoke next morning we were already under way to Alexandria. They had

decided that we should have our working-up exercises from Alexandria after all.

One of those incalculable things that always used to infuriate me about the Navy.

But Wiggy and I got our arrangements tied up, which was the main thing. I gave him my Manchester address and we arranged to contact after the war. A tour was just what Wiggy wanted, he had a good manager back in Toronto, and he liked my playing. And the war with the Japs folded up neatly the following August. So it didn't really matter that he got a sudden draft-chit when we arrived in Aleck and left the ship.

Except that I've never heard a word from Wiggy since. But I had a letter this week from Tug Wilson, Seaman P.O. Wilson, another old messmate of mine. Tug is an active-service rating and is still soldiering on.

Dear Jan (says Tug),

Writing this on 7 days leave in Malta. We're at Magda Laria, I believe you were here during the war, well . . .

But, for once, the paper Tug wrote on interested me more than his letter. You see, it was headed " The John Bull Hotel, Magda Laria." And, underneath, " Proprietors : Madame and Mr. Wiggy Bennett."

You don't know of anyone who wants a good pianist, do you ?

* * *

REPORT

A father who left his six-year-old son in the care of his nine-year-old brother for several hours was, on his return, handed the following note by the older boy :

what Ralph did
ate a prune
cut a crayon with moms sissors
pestered out of me
almost took something out of the
refrigerater
Ralph called you a skunk

From *The New Yorker*

IN SEARCH OF PLEASURE

Nor do I call pleasures idleness, or time lost, provided they are the pleasures of a rational being

LORD CHESTERFIELD, 1694–1773

You tell me that if you were to let the young men out at seven or eight o'clock (on Saturday) they would go into excess ; what do they do when you let them out at nine, ten or eleven ? What healing process has there been in the last three hours ? By continuous confinement to the shop, young men are driven into those fierce stimulants which are the only things that can stir his jaded body and his wearied mind.

BISHOP OF OXFORD *in a debate on The Early Closing Act*, 1848

Prizefight

To see the Hurst with tents encamped on
Look around the scene at Hampton.
'Tis life to cross the laden ferry
With boon companions, wild and merry,
With carts encircled—hear the burst
At distance, of the eager crowd.

PETER COROCAN, *The Fancy*, 1820

Houseparty

Throughout England it is the custom to breakfast together. At ten o'clock each member of the party goes off on his own pursuit —hunting, fishing or walking. So the day passes till 4 o'clock but at 4 o'clock precisely you must present yourself in the drawing-room with a great deal more ceremony than we are accustomed to in France. This sudden change of social manners is quite astonishing and I was deeply struck by it. In the morning you come down in riding-boots and a shabby coat, you sit where you like, you behave exactly as if you were by yourself, no one takes any notice of you. But in the evening, unless you have just arrived, you must be well washed and well-groomed.

Dinner is one of the most wearisome of English experiences, lasting, as it does, for four or five hours. The first two are spent in eating. Your host asks you the whole time whether you like the food and presses you to eat more. After the sweets, you are given water in small bowls of very clean water in order to rinse out your mouth.

After the removal of the cloth, the table is covered with all kinds of wine . . . At this point all the servants disappear. The ladies drink a glass or two of wine and at the end of half an hour all go out together. It is then the real enjoyment begins. One proceeds to drink—sometimes in an alarming measure. Everyone has to drink in his turn. A fresh stimulus is supplied by the drinking of "toasts". If more drinking is required, fresh toasts are always ready to hand; politics can supply plenty—one drinks to the health of Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox. Conversation is as free as it can be. Very often I have heard things mentioned in good society which would be in the grossest taste in France. The sideboard too is furnished with a number of chamber pots. One has no kind of concealment and the practice strikes me as most indecent . . .

Extract from a letter to the duc de Liancourt from his son, in 1784

Bias

The country Squire loves running
A pack of well-mouthed hounds :
Another fancies gunning
For wild-ducks in his grounds :
This hunts ; that fowls ;
This hawks ; that bowls ;
No greater wishing :
But Tom that tells what sport excels
Gives all the praise to fishing.

Author Unknown, c.1700

And For Tranquillity

I doubt if there is any scene in the world more animating or delightful than a cricket match: I do not mean a set match at Lord's for money, hard money, between a certain number of gentlemen and players, as they are called—people who make a trade of that noble sport, and degrade it into an affair of bettings and hedgings and cheatings, it may be, like boxing or horse-racing: nor do I mean a pretty fête in a gentleman's park, where one set of cricketing dandies encounter another such club, and where they show off in graceful costume to a gay margin of admiring belles who condescend so to purchase admiration, and while away a long summer morning in partaking cold collations, conversing occasionally and seeming to understand the game. No, the cricket that I mean is a real solid old-fashioned match between neighbouring parishes, where each attacks the other for honour and a supper, glory and half a crown a man . . .

MARY MITFORD, *Our Village*, 1832

Oh For The Open Road!

" O, pooh ! Boating ! " interrupted the Toad, in great disgust. " Silly boyish amusement. I've given that up *long* ago. Sheer waste of time, that's what it is. It makes me downright sorry to see you fellows, who ought to know better, spending all your energies in that aimless manner. No, I've discovered the real thing, the only genuine occupation for a lifetime. I propose to devote the remainder of mine to it, and can only regret the wasted years that lie behind me, squandered in trivialities. Come with me, dear Ratty, and your amiable friend also, if he will be so very good, just as far as the stable-yard, and you shall see what you shall see ! "

He led the way to the stable-yard accordingly, the Rat following with a most mistrustful expression ; and there, drawn out of the coach-house into the open, they saw a gipsy caravan, shining with newness, painted a canary-yellow picked out with green, and red wheels.

" There you are ! " cried the Toad, straddling and expanding himself. " There's real life for you, embodied in that little cart. The open road, the dusty highway, the heath, the common, the hedgerows, the rolling downs ! Camps, villages, towns, cities ! Here today, up and off to somewhere else tomorrow ! Travel, change, interest, excitement. The whole world before you, and a horizon that's always changing ! . . ."

KENNETH GRAHAME, 1859–1932,
The Wind In The Willows

And Finally, The Midas Touch

There lives an old man at the top of the street,
And the end of his beard reaches down to his feet,
And he's just the one person I'm longing to meet,
I think that he sounds so exciting . . .
He has worked all his life (and he's terribly old)
At a wonderful spell which says, " Lo, and behold !
Your nursery fender is gold ! "—and it's gold !
(Or the tongs, or the rod for the curtain) ;
But somehow he hasn't got hold of it quite,
Or the liquid you pour on it first isn't right,
So that's why he works at it night after night
Till he knows he can do it for certain.

A. A. MILNE, *The Alchemist,*
When We Were Very Young

THE OLDEST TALLAND

"Here," said Mrs. Comber at once to herself, "is a person to do good to"

by HUGH WALPOLE

MRS. COMBER explained to Miss Salter that, although she had been living in Cornwall all these years, she was only now, during this stay at Rafiel, beginning truly to appreciate it.

"You see, my dear, a school's a school, and it does somehow rather take the edge off an appreciation of beauty having to keep the little boys clean and ordering the mutton, although I must say that our matron is a thoroughly capable woman—she comes from Marlborough, where she was for a term, but couldn't endure it because— Well, I'm wandering from the subject—what I mean is that one *does* see things on a holiday that one hasn't quite time for perhaps during term-time."

Rafiel was all the more beautiful for the five days' rain that had but now submerged and obscured it. It was incredible after the dirty grey that it had so recently presented that it could now, so transcendently, glitter and shine. Mrs. Comber had watched it first from the heights of Sea View Villa. From that point it lay huddled, packed together between the hills, with its boats drawn up in rows together inside its square little harbour. Seen thus on a fine day, it caught blue from the sea and green from the hills, and wrapped its slates and stones in reflected lights. From a height it was something that might at any moment be overwhelmed by the sea—something pretty but insignificant.

How different in the heart of it! Mrs. Comber, as she picked her way along the tiny cobbled streets, exclaimed at every step that she took. At first the place offered you a straight and somewhat dingy street, with nothing very different from other streets in other Cornish towns. One or two little shops suggested to the hungry visitor saffron buns, apples and peppermints, and for the untidy inhabitant there were bootlaces, buttons and pins. There was also a Methodist chapel.

But it was when the village had tumbled as far as the post office, that it suddenly made up its mind that it would, from that moment, be as incredible, as haphazard, as beautiful as water, bricks and Nature would allow it to be. Three little streets went dancing into

the sea, little streets with shapeless roofs, steps leading up to green-painted doorways that hung in mid-air, streets with cobbles and dark mysterious caverns and bursting, bulging windows, and across these three little streets a river ran for no reason at all, except that it gave an opportunity for more hanging balconies and green-and-blue reflections of painted doors and shutters. And then the streets and the river were, in an instant, pulled up by the little harbour—a square, shimmering space of blue water—with all the brown and blue-masted boats riding upon it like hounds in leash, and the grey stone pier blocking it from the sea.

The whole village hangs over this blue square and is reflected in it; the sky is painted there, and also the hills. Every mood, every glory, every temper of the place is to be found there. Beyond the stone wall there is the Atlantic, with sharp, jagged rocks (they are called the Peaks) as gateways on either side. All of this is within the compass of five minutes; it is as ancient as it can be, as crooked and unexpected and childish. There are wilder seas here than anywhere on the English coast, save, perhaps, on the Land's End, and the saffron buns, the buttons and the peppermints are very often in danger of being swept away altogether.

And meanwhile on the face of that little square harbour every mood of earth and sky is reflected.

Mrs. Comber took it, on her first vision of it, into the arms of her most extravagant enthusiasm. Her enthusiasms were always perfectly genuine affairs, for, although she always liked to have someone with whom they might be shared, she demanded no audience for their exhibition.

She nearly filled one of the three merry little streets, her cheeks blazing with excitement, a hard black hat slipping, it seemed, from her head, her hair threatening descent, her green skirt, short and showing thick square-toed shoes, her large, good-natured mouth and black, laughing eyes.

Full of health, good temper and colour she was, and she seemed to push back the street from her on both sides with her strong arms.

The natives looked at her, as they looked at all tourists, with a friendly indifference that was ready at any moment to develop into friendly attention if pounds, shillings and pence were in the air. The Rafiel citizens are not mercenary, but as most of them are supporting families on very modest incomes, "tourists" may often make considerable difference to personal comfort. Friendliness, moreover, is invited, and as, again, most of the aforesaid citizens have never in their lives penetrated farther into the heart of the world than St. Tryst, a town seven miles away (many of them have never seen a train), conversation with visitors is instructive and entertaining. At the same time, be it understood, there is never intimacy.

Of these things Mrs. Comber knew nothing. You may be the wife of a schoolmaster in Cornwall for a number of years without knowing anything about Cornwall. The school had always swallowed up all possible backgrounds. This was the first time that Cornwall was considered for itself, and Mrs. Comber, in the burning joy of her enthusiasm, determined to take the inhabitants of Rafiel entirely to her heart.

Here she was, staying at a dull *pension*, and her husband away on the golf links all day—why, of course, the only thing to do was to get to know the place and the people. Anything more attractive than the people were, too! How readily they all said "Good day," how pleasantly they smiled, how amiably they chattered with one another on their bright little doorsteps! As the sun shone and the cobbles glistened, and the sky was blue upon blue and then blue upon that again, Mrs. Comber could have kissed the old fishermen one by one, and the old ladies one after another.

As a matter of fact, the thing that she did do, in the heat of her enthusiasm, was to trample with one of her square-toed shoes upon a small and dirty girl, to send the little thing sprawling, to pick her up with a thousand exclamations, to kiss her dirty mouth, and to carry her, after explanations, back to her family.

Her family, as Fate would have it, was the Talland family.

The Tallands and the Tresennens divide Rafiel between them. They have so divided it ever since that legendary day when the first of the Tallands stood on one of the Peaks and flung rocks at the first of the Tresennens, who stood on the other of the Peaks and did his best to respond in kind.

Relations are outwardly friendly enough between the two families (there is very little bad temper in Rafiel), but through all the centuries there has been no inter-marriage between them, and the rivalry is unremitting, never forgotten, never allowed to lapse.

At the head of the Tallands at this time there ruled an old lady of mythical age. She was so old that the next oldest inhabitant in Rafiel (and he was over ninety) was supposed to be a child to her. Nobody knew how old she was, and she was popularly supposed to have had no beginning; and it was expected that death would never succeed in catching her. As far as appearance went, there was nothing of her face to be seen except a sharp nose, a sharper chin, and two eyes sharper still. The nose and the chin met, and the eyes blazed. These blazing eyes stared at you from the blackness of a dark and low-roofed kitchen. Huddled amongst cushions she faced the world from her corner by the fireplace—faced the world and cursed the Tresennens.

The Talland stronghold was a crooked and uneasy house

perched behind the post office, a little way up the hill, and resting there, as it seemed, on one foot, and leering down at the post office and the harbour with a wink and a snigger; with every wind it threatened collapse. The Tallands had lived there now for a very long time, and it had the advantage of being higher in position than the chief castle of the Tresennens, although the Tresennens, from their windows, could see everyone who went in and out of the Talland doorway.

Here in her dark corner old Mrs. Talland, like the most sinister and patient of spiders, had been sitting for years and years and years.

A long time ago—ten or fifteen years back, it might be—something had happened to the old lady's throat, and her voice disappeared.

The family had at first looked on this event as an unmixed blessing, and some of the younger branches had suggested that the occasion ought to mark the end of the old lady's rule. Little these youngsters knew. After the accident Mrs. Talland's power was redoubled. Now that she could speak no more, her eyes, always fierce enough, had twice their former power. She attained a kind of mystical splendour that had been absent before, and, with the exception of her hard-faced youngest daughter, a maiden lady of some sixty years, who washed and fed her, the family trembled before her glance. Her eldest son, the greatest bully in Rafiel, quailed when she looked at him, and during these years of her rule the Tresennen family did not dare set their feet within a stone's throw of the Talland house.

And it was of the Tresennen family that Mrs. Talland was always thinking. In the days of her youth—and the number of years ago that was only Mrs. Talland knew—she had been concerned in strange happenings up on the windy hill with old Mother Perith, happenings that were connected with broomsticks and wax dolls and fires and skulls and strange weeds from the hedges.

She had not forgotten anything that she had learnt then. Brooding there by her fireplace, she knew the things that she could do to the Tresennens, if she needed. But it was a long time now since she had called those powers to her aid . . . Scornfully she thought to herself that the Tresennens could be kept in their proper place without any need for such assistance.

Fiercely, with furious determination, she bent her will to keeping herself free, independent from any assistance in this world or the next. Clergymen, visitors, doctors had forced upon her, from time to time, their officious presences . . . She had sent them all packing. They had fled before her glance.

Let her once, her old heart fiercely determined, give in to anyone, and her power would be gone and the Tresennens triumph.

There in her stronghold she kept back the world. Then into the kitchen, noisily, with friendship shining about her and in and out of her, Mrs. Comber burst.

The Tresennens, from their windows, marked her entry.

Mrs. Comber stood, smiling, in the doorway, holding tightly by the hand the youngest of the Tallands. Gathered in a little group by the fireplace were other Tallands, a number of them, and huddled amongst her cushions, with her hands shaking a little on her lap and her eyes flaming, was the oldest of them all. Behind her chair stood the gaunt, bony Janet Talland, whose duty it was to keep her mother clean and fed.

The room was very close, as it had every reason to be, because the street door was generally shut, and the little diamond-paned window never opened. The air was heavy with the odour of fish, dying geraniums, saffron buns and tobacco.

Mrs. Comber addressed herself to Miss Janet Talland.

" I do hope I'm not in any way interrupting or interfering, but I was silly enough—careless, perhaps I ought to say—to knock over your little girl ; at least, they tell me this is her home. And how I came to do it I can't think, except that I was admiring your beautiful town and didn't really notice where I was going, which is a silly trick that I really must try—" She broke off and patted the head of the youngest of the Tallands. " I don't think I hurt you, dear, did I ? She cried just a little at first, but it was more fright than anything else, being knocked down suddenly—"

The Tallands had had strange tourists within their castle before, but never any tourist like this tourist. Mrs. Comber, so glowing with colour, so voluble, so eager, froze them into silence. Old Mrs. Talland leaned forward in her chair, and her dry fingers rattled together on her lap.

" Come 'ere, Annie," said Miss Janet Talland. " What be 'ee at, gettin' in the lady's way ? "

Annie disengaged herself from Mrs. Comber's grasp and shuffled across the floor, whimpering.

" I do hope—" began Mrs. Comber. She stopped because she was bewildered by the sudden, sweeping disappearance of most of the Talland family through the street-door. Only the old lady and her grim-faced daughter remained. " I do hope," went on Mrs. Comber, more cheerfully than ever, " that you won't visit the accident on poor little Annie. It wasn't in the least poor Annie's fault. If I'd only looked where I was going—"

It was then that Mrs. Comber noticed old Mrs. Talland. Nobody could have looked, to the outside observer, more helpless and ready for charity. " Here," said Mrs. Comber at once to herself, " is a

person to do good to. Here is the very interest that I have been wanting."

"I hope you don't mind," said Mrs. Comber gaily, "my just stopping a moment or two. I'm not interrupting you in anything, am I? Because just tell me if I am, and go on doing just the things that you'd do if I weren't here. Make me at home, you know." She sat down in a chair by the fire quite close to Mrs. Talland.

The old woman leant forward still farther and stared at her. It was many months now since any visitor had braved her presence, but no visitor within her memory had braved her as this one did. The flaunting, highly coloured, bold-faced thing! Mrs. Talland always disliked seeing youth and vigour and energy—it made her feel old—but this noise and heartiness in one who was no longer young simply disgusted her. She would have liked to slap Mrs. Comber's red cheeks. She looked up at her daughter. Why was Janet not sending the woman to the right-about, as she generally did? She was actually allowing her to sit there.

Janet had at first been taken aback by Mrs. Comber's energy, and then, as the minutes passed, her slow brain began to move. She knew well enough the things that her mother was thinking. She knew how she must hate the impertinence of this woman. But also she knew that for many, many years now she had served the old woman and received no return for it, had served her faithfully and obeyed her in everything. In the woman's heart, although she had not known it until now, for many years resentment had been growing. Supposing that she should disobey her now? A fierce, hot pleasure was in her breast at the thought of getting some revenge at last. Moreover, this woman, were she treated gently, would bring things into the house—jellies and fruits and custards. And oh, how the old tyrant would hate it!

"Sit you down, ma'am," Janet said slowly. "You aren't disturbing us, I assure 'ee. Mother can't tark—'er speech is gone this many a year."

"Poor old woman! Poor old woman!" said Mrs. Comber, her voice full of compassion.

"But she ain't deaf, all the same," said Miss Talland, fearful lest the tourist should drive her mother to some sudden frenzy. "'Er 'earing's arl right."

Mrs. Comber was filled with the most genuine feelings of pity and tenderness. She hated anyone to be as feeble and desolate as this poor old lady. The room seemed to her dirty and uncared-for. And how terrible to be unable to speak and to be in the hands of that cruel-looking woman. Mrs. Comber felt that she would never sleep again did she not relieve in some way Mrs. Talland's condition.

"Oh, but I *am* sorry!" she cried, and her large black eyes were

full of tenderness. "How dreadful not to be able to talk! I don't know what I should do if such a thing were to happen to me. Although, perhaps," she went on, laughing gaily, "some people would say it was a good thing, because, you know, I do talk so much, too much; and it's a trick I've tried to break myself of ever since I was a girl, and I've never been able to."

Mrs. Talland's hands rapped against each other in an agony. What was this horrible thing, and what, above all, was Janet about? It was then that, flinging a sharp glance at her daughter, she caught a first glimpse of the thoughts that were passing behind those cold eyes. Janet stood, gaunt and severe, with her hands folded in front of her, and about her mouth there lingered the suspicion of a grim smile.

"Yes," she said, "it do be 'ard for Mother, for she was always one to love a good tark, and now she must sit there and listen, as you might say."

"Oh, dear, dear, I *am* sorry," said Mrs. Comber. She found it so difficult to force herself to remember that Mrs. Talland was not deaf as well as dumb. "But, really, Mrs. Talland, I want to do everything I can to help you." Here Mrs. Talland's hands were more frantic than ever. "Yes, I will, indeed. If there's anything I can do. Perhaps, Miss Talland, you can suggest—"

"Well," said Miss Talland slowly, "Mother du have a likin' to jellies and them soup squares, as you *are* so kindly askin'. The doctor 'asn't been in for a long time, but the last day 'e *was* 'ere I remember 'is sayin' that a drop o' soup *and* a little jelly—"

Surely about Mrs. Talland's ears the world must have seemed, at that moment, to be tumbling. In her breast there was a fierce, dogged determination to fight to the bitter end, but it was the first rebellion that she had had to meet for many a long year . . . And then from Janet—Janet, the most faithful of servants.

She did what she could with her face, striving to fling into her eyes all the hatred and loathing and disgust that was in her heart. Oh, if she could have spoken what things she would have said!

"Well," continued Mrs. Comber amiably, "that's very good of you, Miss Talland, to tell me the kind of thing. But do you really mean to tell me that the doctor hasn't been here for a long time?"

"No, that 'e 'asn't." Miss Talland did not add that, owing to the plain speaking of the Talland family on his last visit, he had uttered a solemn vow never to cross their threshold again.

"And he looks such a nice, kind man," said Mrs. Comber. "I really must speak to him, because a doctor can be such a help sometimes. I remember once when a little boy of mine was ill that I was in such trouble about him because he'd got a rash, but it might have been just from over-eating himself in the hot weather. But our

doctor was so clever about him. Really, if he hadn't been there—well," she continued brightly, getting up from her chair, " I mustn't trouble you any longer, Miss Talland. I'm sure you must have heaps to do, and I must be getting along. But I *have* enjoyed this talk so much. It *is* so nice getting to know you all. Good-bye, Mrs. Talland. Be assured that I will do everything for you that's possible, and I'll speak to the doctor about coming to see you. I'll look in myself again in a little time. I'm *so* glad we've made one another's acquaintance. Good-bye."

Mrs. Comber shook hands with the unresponsive Janet, and was gone.

It must be confessed that, for a moment, as the two women faced one another, Janet's courage forsook her. Mrs. Talland had not established her rule during all these years for nothing. The old woman's eyes were living flames. As she sat up amongst her cushions her whole body was tense with hatred, horror, surprise, vindictive longing to tear someone limb from limb.

Certainly, at that instant, those things that had belonged to Mother Perith many years ago might now have found themselves once more a home. Janet had often seen her mother look angry before, but she had never seen anything like this. She faced her mother's eyes—drew fire from them during a long moment, and then, slowly stealing back her gaze, she smiled. Mrs. Talland knew then that the moment had come that she had dreaded ever since she had lost her voice. Her rule was threatened.

But, worse than that, from the Tresennen windows, eyes—eager, mocking eyes—were watching. They had seen that woman come. They would see her come again.

It was well, at that moment, for Mrs. Comber that she was not within reach of Mrs. Talland's long and grasping fingers.

Very shortly after this, Mrs. Comber, up at Sea View Villa, met the doctor, who had been invited in to bridge. She talked to him a great deal, and amongst other things she mentioned the Tallands.

" Of course, it's really no business of mine, Doctor, but that poor old woman did look so uncared-for there, with only that grim, ugly woman to look after her. She looked as though she needed company so badly, and I thought, perhaps, if you were to go in and just give her a bright word—"

" I'm afraid bright words, Mrs. Comber," said the doctor, " are not things that the Talland family care for very much. Last time I was there they were so rude to me that I vowed I'd never go again. But still—I promise you—I'll try once more."

" Of course," said Mrs. Comber, " they're difficult."

" Just as though," the doctor said to his wife afterwards, " she'd been visiting Cornish fishermen all her days."

In her own mind Mrs. Comber concluded that the doctor had been rough with the poor people, and, of course, they didn't like that.

Nevertheless, the doctor kept his word and went, and, to his great surprise, was allowed by Janet to examine the old lady and to suggest medicines. Janet did not, indeed, say much to him during the visit; for the most part she remained, with her hands folded, grimly watching her mother, but the doctor was permitted to do what he would.

" Really, Mrs. Comber," he said after his visit, " you're a wonderful person. I don't know what you've done to them, but a month ago it was as much as my life was worth to go inside their door."

And Mrs. Comber was pleased. She now paid a visit every afternoon, and sat there sometimes for half an hour talking to Mrs. Talland. She did not in the least mind the fact that Mrs. Talland was unable to answer her. She liked to have someone to whom she might talk without interruption.

Then she brought the vicar's wife, who brought tracts and left them on Mrs. Talland's table. And from their windows the Tresennens watched it all . . .

And Mrs. Comber was really happy, and spent much more than she could afford on jellies and soups and chickens.

The younger Tallands had watched these things with dumb, gasping amazement. They had always left the treatment of the head of the family in Janet's capable hands. Janet had invariably good reasons for everything that she did, and it was to be supposed, therefore, that she had good reasons for what she did now. Slowly some inkling of the truth stole in upon them. Very, very slowly they understood.

Meanwhile, what old Mrs. Talland suffered no human being will ever know. She wrote desperate words on the slate that she was given for expressing her desires. But her old fingers were very shaky now.

" Burn," " Woman," " Hate," " Hell," could be deciphered.

If eyes could have slain, Janet would long ago have been dead. When the washing, dressing and undressing periods arrived, Mrs. Talland would have bitten or strangled or torn her daughter had she been able, but Janet was a very strong woman.

Had only a week passed since this horrible creature's first arrival ? Already the other Tallands, the sons, the daughters-in-law, paid less attention to her. No longer did they come in with soft step " lest Granny should be sleepin'." They pretended not to hear her when she rattled her slate-pencil at them.

They did not often come to her now and amuse her with the gossip of the town.

She could do nothing—she could do nothing.

Her doom had come upon her.

At last the definite moment of defeat came. Little Annie, who had always, until now, been in the utmost terror of her great-grandmother, was left in charge whilst Janet was busily employed with shopping.

The girl looked at the old woman and then defiantly, if just a little timidly, began to whistle between her teeth in a way that she had always understood was abominable to an older person.

Mrs. Talland rattled her pencil against her slate.

Annie continued to whistle.

Mrs. Talland stamped with her foot (it was a very feeble tap); she clapped her hands together, gnashed her two teeth.

Annie paused a moment, her legs apart, facing the chair.

"Shan't!" she said, and then, appalled by her daring, ran from the room.

The old woman was alone. Shaking from head to foot, she did what she had not done for many years: she got up from her chair. Leaning on her stick, she tottered to a drawer that was near. From this she extracted something, then tottered back to her place.

With her cap off her head, the cushions tumbling about her, muttering, she began to turn and twist the thing that she had in her hands. It was a piece of old, soiled, grimy wax.

Her brain was fiery with thoughts of that red-faced woman who had ruined her life. She turned the wax, muttering.

But it would not twist; it was so hard and old. It fell from her nerveless fingers and lay amongst the ashes in the hearth. Her last resort was gone. The old world had faded, the old gods and devils had fled. There was a new order now, a new world.

The end of her life had come. Tired, thin tears trickled slowly down the dried furrows of her cheeks.

Twenty-four hours later she was dead.

"Poor thing," said Mrs. Comber when she heard of the funeral. "But I'm glad that I did a little something to brighten her last hours."

* * *

THE WHOLE TRUTH

"When I have one foot in the grave," said Tolstoy, "I will tell the whole truth about women. I shall tell it, jump into my coffin, pull the lid over me, and say 'Do what you like now.'"

ARE YOU TOO LATE?

Or was I too early?

by JOHN COLLIER

IN the country, I accept the normal and traditional routine, doing what every man does—rising early, eating when I should, turning up my coat collar when it rains. I see the reason for it, and shave at the same hour every morning.

Not so in town. When I live in London, I feel no impulse in the starling migrations of the rush hours. There is no tide in any submarine cave, anywhere, that is not more to me than the inflow and outflow at the cold mouths of offices or the hot mouths of restaurants. I find no growth in time, no need for rain, no sense in sobriety, no joy in drinking, no point in paying, no plan in living. I exist, in this alien labyrinth, like an insect among men, or a man in a city of ants.

I despise the inconsiderable superiority of the glum day over the starless night. My curtains are always drawn ; I sleep when my eyes close, eat when I remember and read and smoke without ceasing, allowing my soul to leave my wastrel and untended carcass, and seldom do I question it when it returns.

My chambers are in the stoniest of the Inns of Court. I keep no servant here, for I mean always to go back to the country within the week, though sometimes I stay for months, or—I don't know how long. I supply myself with immense stocks of cigarettes, and such food as I happen to remember, so that I shall have no reason to return from the landscapes of Saturn or the undescribed gardens of Turgenev in order to go out into the streets.

My fingers are horribly blistered by the cigarettes that burn down between them while still I walk in the company of women with the heads of cats. Nothing seems strange to me when I wake from such reveries unless I part the curtains and look out into the square. Sometimes I have to press my hands under my heart to resume the breathing that I have entirely forgotten.

I was constantly ambushed and defeated in I forget what journeys, or what loves, or where, by the fullness of a saucer in which a hand of mine failed to find room to crush out its cigarettes. Habit, which arranges these things, demanded some other receptacle.

I rose, holding my thoughts as one holds a brimming glass, and moved into the bathroom, drawn by the vague memory of a soap dish, which lay stranded like an empty shell on the empty beaches of a blank mind. But, swallowed by God knows what high-reaching wave, that shell was gone, and my reviving eyes, straying at first aimlessly, soon called me back again—poor Crusoe!—to regard on the cork mat a new, wet, glistening imprint of a naked foot.

It was not long before I assured myself that I was dry, dressed in my pyjamas and slippers, and that I was not clean. Moreover, this foot, the prints of whose toes were as round as graded pearls, was neither long, like that of a man, nor hideous, like that of a bear; it was not my own. It was that of a woman, a nymph, a new-risen Venus. I conceived that my wandering spirit had brought me back a companion from some diviner sea's edge, and some more fortunate shell.

I drank up this moist footprint with my hot eyes; it dried as I looked upon it. It was not the air took it but I; I had it for my own.

I examined it for days and nights, building upon its graceful rotundities arched insteps, ankles equally graceful, and calves proportionately round. I deduced knees, haunches, breasts, shoulders, arms, plump hands and pointed fingers, full neck, small head, and the long curl, like the curve when the wave breaks, of the green-gold hair.

Where there falls one footprint there must fall another; I had no doubt I should soon be vouchsafed the dull gleam of her hair. For this I at once became ravenous, and slunk restlessly from room to room.

I noticed, with half-unconscious approval, that even the neglected furnishings seemed responsive to the goddess, and stood clean and tidy as onlookers at a holiday. The carpet, as if she were Persephone instead of Venus, bloomed with new flowers beneath her invisible feet. The sun shone through the open window, and warm airs entered.

At what moment had I swept back the curtains and extended this invitation to sun and air? Perhaps she had done so herself. It was, however, impossible to attend to such lovely trifles. I desired the gleam of her hair. "Forgive me for having rejoiced in the pallor of the dead! Forgive me for having conversed with women who smelled like lions! Show me your hair!"

I was devoured by a cruel nostalgia for this being who was always with me. Supposing, I thought, waking in my strangely fresh bed, supposing she appeared terrifyingly in the darkness, white as marble, and as cold! At that moment, I felt an intermittent

warmth on my cheek, and knew that she breathed beside me.

There was nothing to clasp but the empty air. For days, I moved to and fro, my blood howling in me like a dog that bays the moon, " There is nothing but the empty air."

I persuaded myself that this was nonsense. I had seen the trace of beauty, and felt the warmth of life. Gradually, one sense after another would be refracted on this divine invisibility, till she stood outlined like a creature of crystal, and then as one of flesh and blood. As soon as I was well persuaded, I saw her breath dimming upon a mirror.

I saw some flowers, which had appeared, part their petals as she bent her face to them. Hurrying there, I smelled not the flowers but her hair.

I threw myself down, and lay like a dog across the threshold, where, once or twice in the day, I might feel the light breeze of her passing. I was aware of the movement of her body, or of an eddy in the light where she moved; I was aware of the beating of her heart.

Sometimes, as if out of the corner of my eye, I saw, or thought I saw, not her bright flesh but the light on her flesh, which vanished as I widened my eyes upon it.

I knew where she moved, and how she moved, but I was destroyed by a doubt, for she did not move towards me. Could there be some other existence, to which she was more responsive, some existence less tangible than her own? Or was she my unwilling prisoner here? Were those movements, of which I was not the object, the movements of one who longed only to escape?

It was impossible to tell. I thought I might know everything if only I could hear her voice. Perhaps she could hear mine.

I said to her, day and night, " Speak to me. Let me hear you. Tell me you have forgiven me. Tell me you are here for ever. Tell me you are mine."

Day and night I listened for her answer.

I waited in that unutterable silence, as one who, in a darkness equally profound, might await the arrival of a gleam of light from a star in whose existence he had good reason to believe. In the end, when I had ceased to hope or believe, I became aware of a sound—or something as near to a sound as the light on her cheek was near to the flesh of her cheek.

Now, living only in my eardrum, not moving, not breathing, I waited.

This ghost of a sound increased; it passed through infinite gradations of rarity. It was like the faintest stridulations of grasshoppers: it was like the fluttering of wings, the confused words

of water; it was like words blown away in the wind; like words in a foreign tongue. It grew more distinct, closer.

Sometimes my hearing failed me, exactly as one's sight fails, dimmed suddenly by tears, when one is about to see the face one has always loved, after an ineffable absence. Or she would fall silent, and then I was like one who follows the sound of a brook, and loses it under the muffling trees or under the ground. But I found it again, and each time it was clearer and stronger. I was able to distinguish words. I heard the word "love"; I heard the word "happy."

I heard, in a full opening of the sense, the delicate intake of her breath, the very sound of the parting of her lips. She was about to speak again.

Each syllable was as clear as a bell. She said, "Oh, it's perfect. It's so quiet for Harry's work. Guess how we were lucky enough to get it! The previous tenant was found dead in his chair, and they actually say it's haunted."

* * *

NO ROSE WITHOUT . . .

"Laura S." writes from Hampton Court:

> *I am being constantly scolded by a maiden aunt for showing a preference for the society of two gentlemen at the same time. I assure you there can be no harm in it; for, as I flirt with both, neither can accuse me of showing a preference. Is it wrong, think you, to laugh and joke with an agreeable young man or two when you are not engaged?*

Here the editorial warning was apt, and one hopes it was acted upon:

> *Laura, beware! Cupid cannot countenance such coquetry. Make your decision and be steadfast in your love. You will do well to remember that a coquette is a rose from which every lover plucks a leaf; the thorns are left for her future husband.*

From *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (Mid-Nineteenth century), quoted in *Mr. and Mrs. Beeton*, by H. MONTGOMERY HYDE

★*Herodotus, the father of history, was a lover of anecdote, and his tales, written in Greek in the fifth century B.C., live again in the picturesque Elizabethan translation by a scholar known to us only by the initials "B.R." "Candaules' Lady" is a legend about a King of Sardis, of the stock of Hercules.*

CANDAULES' LADY

from

"The Famous Hystory of Herodotus"

KING CANDAULES was passing well affectioned to his wyfe, in so much that for the singular love he bare her, he thought her to excell al women in the comly feature of the body. And hereof being himselfe fully persuaded, hee fortuned to fall in talke with Gyges, sonne of Dascylus, one of the chiefe and principall of his garde (whom also he especially favoured, and not seldome employed him in matters of greate weight) advauncing unto him the seemly shape of his wife above measure.

In short space after (for the evill hap haunted hym) meetinge with the aforesayde Gyges, hee beganne thus:

My faythfull servaunt Gyges, whereas thou seemest not to credite the large vauntes and often bragges which I make of my Ladyes beauty and comlynesse (the eares of men being much more incredulous than their eyes) behold I will so bring to passe, that thou shalt see her naked.

Whereat the pore Gentleman greatlye abashed, and in no wyse willyng to assent therto, made answere as followeth:

My Lord (quoth he) what manner of speech is this which unadvisedly you use in perswading me to beholde my ladyes secrets. For a woman, you know, the more in sight the lesse in shame. Who togeather with her garmentes layth asyde her modestye. Honest preceptes have bene devised by our elders which wee ought to remember. Whereof this is one, that every man ought to behold his owne.

For myne own part I easily beleeve you, that of all women in the world, there is none comparable unto her in beauty. Wherfore I beseech your grace, to have me excused, if in a case so heynous and unlawfull, I somewhat refuse to obay your will.

Gyges having in this sort acquitted himselfe, fearing the daunger that might ensue, the King began afresh to replye, saying, My good

Gyges, take heart of grace, and feare not . . . Pull upp thy spirites, and leave al to mee: it is I that will worke the meanes, whereby shee shall never know any part of herselfe to have bene seene by any creature living. Listen then awhyle and give eare to my counsayle.

When night is come the door of the chaumber wherein wee lye being wyde set open, I will covertly place thee behynde the same: strayght at my entraunce thereinto, her custome is not to be long after mee. Directly at her coming in, there standeth a bench, whereat unclothing herselfe, shee accustometh to lay her garmentes uppon it, propoundinge her devine and angelicall body to bee seene and viewed for a long space; this done, as she turnes from the bench to bedwarde, her backe being toward thee, have care to slip privily out of the dores lest haply she espye thee.

The gentleman seeing hymselfe taken in a trap that in no wyse he could escape without perfourmance of his Lords folly, gave his assent, and at an hour appointed stood in a readines, whom Candaules closly brought into his chaumber: and immediatly after came the Queene: whom Gyges having beheld at his pleasure, when her back was turned crept out of the dore, yet not so secretly but that the Queene had a glimpse of hym, and perceyved, who hee was.

The Lady, seeing the fond and undiscrete treacherye of her husband, made little adoe, and seemed as though shee had seene nothing. Albeit fully mynding to bee revenged of the shameless foolish facte of her espoused Lord.

For with the Lydians, and welnygh also with the rest of the Barbarians, it is a greate reproach even for a man to be seene unclothed. Howbeit for the present tyme she kept silent, makyng no semblaunce of any displeasure.

The day following, having assembled certayne of her household servauntes, in whom shee hadde especiall confidence, Gyges was sent for and, suspecting nothing lesse then that hys deceipt was knowen, spedely and with all diligence adressed hym to come: being wont also at other tymes to come to the Queene as oft as yt pleased hyr to sende for him. When he had entred the chaumber she began to assayle him in these wordes:

Now, Gyges, of two present wayes I give thee free choyce which of them both thou wilt take: eyther to slay the King Candaules and enjoy mee with the Kingedome of Lydia: or thyselfe presently to lose thy lyfe. Lest in obeying thy Lord in that thou oughtest not, thou be henseforth privye to that which thou shouldest not.

There is no remedy but that one of you both must die, ether the mayster or the man, ether hee which led thee hereunto, or thyselfe

that sawest mee naked, and diddest those thinges which wer unlawful to be done.

Gyges herewith amazed beganne first to beseech her humbly, entreating her not to bynd him to so harde a condition.

Neverthelesse being not able to perswade her, and seeing it necessarye eyther to murther his Lord, or to be murthered, he deemed it the better choyse to lyve hymselfe, addressing his speech to the Queene in this wyse :

My Soveraygne Lady (quoth he) synce of necessity you compell mee to become guylty of the blood of my Kinge, let mee heare by what meanes wee shall set uppon him.

Of a truth (sayed shee) our treason shall proceede from the same place from whence he betrayed my shame. The assault shall be givin when hee is asleepe.

The wretched Gentleman dryven to so harde a strayght, that eyther hee must slaye or be slayne, made no delay but followed the Queene into her bed chaumber, whom with a naked dagger in hys hand, she prively placed behynd the same dore, from whence Gyges afterwardes arysing bereaved Candaules of his life, and obtayned both hys wyfe and his kingedome.

* * *

PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB

Life is a beautiful, wonderful thing,
And so are the flowers that bloom in the spring.
Next door to magic, the dawn of young love ;
Achingly sweet the stars up above !
Music and art and the metrical muse ;
The skies at sunrise with their breathtaking hues !
The world is so full of a number of treasures
That mortals may choose of its joys and its pleasures.

So YOU *take the young love, the flowers and the song—*
WE'VE *just made a date with a padded chaise longue.*

ROD MACLEAN

Entreaty

FAIR seagull on the seething tide, like snow or the white moon in colour, your beauty is unsullied, like a patch of sunlight, gauntlet of the sea; lightly you skim the ocean wave, swift proud bird whose food is fish. Let us go here side by side, lily of the sea, of the hue of glossy paper, like a nun, on the crest of the sea flood, a maid of demure fame—you shall have wide glory.

Go, seagull, to the corner of the castle wall, and look to see her of the colour of Eigr on the bright rampart. Tell her my words of entreaty, and let her choose me—go to the girl. If it is she, make bold to greet her, be tactful with the delicate girl, be courtly and polished; tell her I cannot live unless I win her, I love her with a full-fed passion. Good sirs, neither Merlin who longed for kisses, nor Taliesin, ever loved a fairer than she! She is eloquent of speech, copper-haired like corn, of perfect form, most neat and comely. Ah seagull, if you come to see the cheek of her who is loveliest in Christendom, unless I get a gentle answer the girl will be my destruction.

DAFYDD AP GWILYM, *Fourteenth Century*

HAVE you been at Garnavilla, or have you seen in Garnavilla the gay young girl of the golden locks, my sweetheart, Kate of Garnavilla?

She's whiter than the swan on the pool, or the snow on the crest of the bending bough; her kiss is sweeter than the dew on the rose, my sweetheart, Kate of Garnavilla.

Her song is more tuneful than the blackbird or thrush, or the nightingale on the willow bough; like a ship in sail on the mistless wave I see my sweetheart, Kate of Garnavilla . . .

EDWARD LYSAGHT, 1763–1810

Translated from the Welsh and the Irish
by Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson

★*EVERY man has his dream of the might have been or the still might be. With HENRY LIPTON, who led a sophisticated and unadventurous life in Washington, D.C., it was tigers. One evening at a dinner party Henry heard a young Indian prince describe a tiger hunt, and decided that for him it was now or never. He set off for India by air on his fortieth birthday, to the amazement of his partners in a distinguished law firm, of MRS. ROBBIE, his Scots housekeeper, and CAROLINE, a Washington hostess who hoped to marry him.*

On the flying boat he met TONY MARRIOTT, an intimidating young Englishwoman, formerly a Senior Commander in the A.T.S. When there was engine trouble and the flying boat's passengers had to spend a night on the edge of a desert, Tony took command of the situation and hunted gazelle for supper. As they approached India she explained that she also was going tiger hunting. She knew the ropes backwards. Why shouldn't Henry team up with her? With some misgivings he consented.

When they sighted their first tiger Henry missed his chance to shoot, and it was Tony who killed it.

The Last Part of

MY TIGER

by DAVID WALKER

THEIR return to the rest house was something of a triumphal procession. Tony and Henry walked in front. Then came the tiger hanging upside down from a stout pole, the ends borne on many competitive shoulders. Behind the tiger thronged the other beaters in a voluble horde. "Aiii!" they called in their cracked jubilant voices, recounting the story a hundred times with embellishments. Bhagwan pranced up and down the line. He carried the two rifles, one on each shoulder. "Oh, the very great brave Miss Sahib!" he kept shouting. "*O, bahut vari . . . !*" If it had been a Bhagwan day from the beginning, it was a day of days now, for achievement lay behind and baksheesh in plentiful measure ahead.

The villagers had turned out to a man, to a woman, to a child. They lined the dusty street, laughing shouting; "*Shabash!* Well done!" and saying vulgar rude things about tigers. Small naked boys dashed out boldly to touch the body, and small naked girls, eyes kohl-darkened, stood with their fingers in their mouths. It was the children you noticed most. They were lively—not just

excited for the moment; they were the liveliest things you ever saw, full of fun and quickness in a land where energy dies young.

In this procession perhaps Henry was the only one who felt out of it. He was still mad at himself for his failure earlier in the day; and now he did not even have a lump to console him, to remind him how exceedingly sharp the pain in the back of his neck had been. But mostly he was unhappy because he knew that this great tiger should have been his, not Tony's at all. And, if the truth be told, he was jealous of her, unreasonably foolishly jealous, knowing that he could not pretend to himself by any conceivable stretch of the imagination that she had wiped his eye. Still, she was too damned bossy, too damned perfect, too damned knowledgeable. *You'll learn in time*, she had said to him, which rankled. They're all the same, the English, he thought sourly.

They walked on side by side, Miss Marriott's shoulder a little below Henry's shoulder, not quite so tall but greater in stature.

"Well, we cooked his goose," she said after they had climbed the hill out of the village and into the rest-house compound.

"You certainly did," said Henry. He hung about while the tiger was laid out for measurement, stretched as long as it would go and pegs driven in at the tips of nose and tail. "Nine foot ten," she said. "A good one." It was not only a good one; it was enormous. Then Bhagwan began the skinning, and Henry went off to have a bath.

But he felt better afterwards when they sat on the verandah. He felt a lot better now that he could lie back with his legs on the long arms of his Roorkee chair, watching the shadows grow softer while the heat faded out of the day.

The rest-house lay on the north side of the foothills. The plain of the Dun was spread out before them, a checker-board of green crops in the predominant brown. Beyond were the Himalayas. They did not begin gradually, but rose as an abrupt six-thousand-foot rampart, the beginnings of the great hills which stretched through Tibet and Sin-kiang over the roof of the world to Russia.

"Bhagwan thinks there's another tiger."

"I hope there is. I'll try not to move next time."

"Don't wonder you moved. Tell me, Lipton. What's your job at home?"

This caught Henry unawares. After asking him once where he lived, she had never evinced the slightest interest in his background; and in the jungle all talk, any talk, had been about hunting. "I'm a lawyer."

"What kind? A barrister?"

"I don't go into court. I specialize in corporation cases. Why?"

"Just wondered. Lipton!"

"Yes?"

"Do women shoot much in America?"

"No. No, I guess they don't, not the ones I know anyway." Visions of Caroline out hunting.

"What sort of women do you know?"

"I dunno. The usual sort."

" I bet you have a housekeeper. What's she like ? "

" She's Scotch." Henry glanced at Tony. Why these rapid-fire questions ? What was it in aid of ? But her brown face was expressionless. She was looking at the hills. " Where do you live in England ? "

" Sometimes in London, sometimes in Dorset."

" D'you have a job ? "

" Not since I left the service."

" Is a Senior Commander a sort of General ? "

" No, it's not. It's a sort of Major." She sounded slightly stuffy.

" I thought you'd have been a lady General."

" Well, you thought wrong."

Silence.

" There are the snows turning pink now."

" Yes. It certainly is beautiful."

Silence.

" Lipton ! "

" Yes ? "

" Like my dress ? "

Henry took a lightning look at the dress he hadn't noticed. " Why, yes. Yes, it's a swell dress."

Mohammed Khan, who was Tony's bearer, now came padding around the corner of the verandah on his bare feet in a hurry. " Miss Sahib ! "

"Yes ? "

" There is bad news from the next village. The black panther is here."

" What black panther ? "

" The man-eater of Paraudi. It killed today. It is a terrible killer."

" What does he say, Tony ? "

She told him. " It's news to me. I've never heard of this panther."

" But the sahib is coming to shoot it. He is coming to this bungalow tonight, the great Finigan sahib."

The effect of this remark on Tony was electrical. She sat up with a jerk in her chair, put her hand to her mouth and went pale.

" What's this ? Who's Finigan ? " Henry was a fellow who liked to know what was going on, and Tony gave him only the barest, most clipped accounts of her Indian conversations, so he was always hanging on for clues, picking up fag-ends of talk.

" Finigan thinks he's the most wonderful thing that ever stepped," she said. " Finigan goes round shooting man-eaters and being a hero. He's a crook and I loathe his guts." She spoke with the bitterest of vehemence. From that, and from her angry face, flushed now, a person of the meanest intelligence would have guessed that Miss Marriott had it in for Finigan.

" So you know him ? "

" I knew him in the war. He ran a jungle-warfare course in the C.P. Oh, hell's bells."

" What's wrong ? "

"Nothing's wrong. Only I don't want that—hanging about here."

"But if he's come to hunt a . . ." Henry did not finish his sentence, for she stood up abruptly and went away. She came back in a minute with two whiskies and sodas.

That's odd, Henry thought, sipping his drink. She's scared of this Finigan. I never thought she'd be scared of anything. Well, well.

Just then there was the sound of a car approaching. It turned into the driveway of the rest-house and came up fast in low gear. Henry turned in his chair. It was an open jeep, piled high with luggage, two men in it. It stopped round the back of the building, and there was a moment's silence. Then a loud hearty voice began to shout in Hindustani, and there was much Indian laughter.

"It's Finigan all right," she muttered.

"Bring me whisky," bellowed Finigan in English. "Bring it now this minute."

He came round the bungalow and on to the verandah. He looked much as his voice sounded, a dusty bull of a man with a big black moustache, shirt open to the waist showing a hairy chest, shorts, bare legs, and bare . . . yes, of all things, bare feet.

Henry stood up. Tony remained seated. Finigan saw her and halted in his tracks. Was the dislike mutual? But it was not mutual for he gave a roar of delight. "Tony Marriott! Now of all the sweet surprises!" He advanced on the flinching girl, towered over her; then put out a hand like a leg of mutton and actually chucked her under the chin.

"Don't do that," she said in a strangled voice.

"*Don't do that*! A fine way to greet your old admirer, Marcus Finigan. Now isn't that the greatest stroke of luck meeting you here. Who's this chap? Your husband?"

"No, he's not; and for God's sake sit down and stop behaving like Tarzan."

"How d'you do?" he said, grasping Henry's hand. "She's a proper tigress, is our Tony. Fierce as the very divil."

He took the whisky bottle and a large glass from his bearer, poured the sort of drink you would expect, and sat down.

"I hear you've come to shoot the panther," said Henry.

"I have indeed. I've been after that boy on and off for a year now. He's a bad one. He's the worst I ever was after and I was after plenty. And what are you doing here, Tony my ewe-lamb?"

"Shooting tigers. Got one today. Nine foot ten."

"Nine foot ten indeed. Isn't that the greatest sized beast for a girl to shoot!"

Tony stood up and went away. The door of her room closed.

"She doesn't fancy me," said Finigan in a low voice sadly. "She never forgave the wrong I done her. It was just a prank too, after some whisky in the Jubbulpore club. I put her up on my shoulder in her little uniform with the officer's pips, and I called to everybody: *Here's the Senior Commander, the Queen of the Jungle.*

And would you believe it she slapped my face. So I was insulted for a minute and I turned her upside down and smacked her bottom in retaliation for fun. But would she forgive me? No, never; never never although I was on my bended knees often. She's a great girl, Tony Marriott, nobody like her." Finigan sighed. He lay back in his chair, and there was an aura of masculine power about him while he twiddled his big bare dusty toes.

Henry laughed and went on laughing. The thought of this black Irishman smacking Tony's bottom was irresistibly funny, that being the most improbable thing that could happen to the Olympian Tony Marriott, mistress of all she surveyed. "Do you think you'll get the panther?" he said after a while.

"It's the best chance I've had at him yet. The big river's only a few miles west, and he won't cross that, so he's got to kill here or turn back. If he'll kill once more, I might get him. It's a difficult business with an old man-eater as cunning as Satan."

"Could I help you?" Henry said that on the spur of the moment.

"Do you have experience?" Finigan looked at him sharply.

"None at all."

He shook his head. "It's a dirty game. You'd be better sticking to the tiger beats."

"I'd like to try it."

Finigan changed the subject. "There were some wild American boys here during the war. Did you know Jack Archer?" He named several other names; all strange to Henry, of course.

"How long have you been in India?"

"Sixteen years. Started in the army; I only stood that for a year. I've been on the loose ever since except for the war. I was home in Ireland once, but there's no scope in a little small bit of a place like that. You know what shooting man-eaters means?"

"I have an idea."

"It means a nasty feeling in the back of your neck; it means sitting up over stinking human bodies; it means hoping somebody else is going to get killed; it means you've got to be as tough as I am, without a nerve in your body. It's a dirty business suitable for ruffians like me, not for decent chaps. But I'll take you if you want; if you'll do what I tell you."

"Thanks," said Henry.

"Could I have the use of your bath? I'd like to be smelling my best for Tony."

"Go ahead."

Finigan went ahead. He bellowed for water, and there was much scurry and hurry and laughter round the corner. "*Ghusal taiyar hai, sahib.*" It was evident that he did something startling to Indians. He was about as unlike the ordinary inhibited dignified Englishman in India as it was possible to imagine. And you couldn't tell just meeting him that way whether he was really the rogue you thought he must be. Henry rather liked him, as you often like people who are the exact opposite of yourself. Finigan uncoiled his bulk now and went off quietly and lightly on his bare feet. No sooner had he

shut the door of Henry's room than Tony appeared out of hers.

"Finigan went to take a bath."

"So I heard. What's he been saying to you?"

"We were just talking. I'm going after the man-eater with him."

"You're *what*?"

"I'm going to help him shoot the panther."

"You must be crazy, Lipton. You've never shot anything in your life." Tony leaned forward, gripping the arms of her chair so fiercely that he thought she might spring at him any moment. "D'you mean to say that—said he'd take you?"

"Yeah."

"Well, it's out of the question. I won't have you doing a thing like that."

A tingle ran up Henry's spine. He was annoyed with her. Yes, he was. He'd taken too much pushing around from this ill-mannered girl. "That's what I'm going to do."

"But you haven't even shot your tiger yet."

"I'll shoot that after the other."

"Look here, Lipton," she began, eyes sparkling with anger, "I've gone to a lot of trouble for you . . ."

"For God's sake," interrupted Henry sharply but coldly. "For God's sake will you quit calling me Lipton? Call me Henry or call me nothing, but do *NOT* say Lipton. Never say it again. I'm not a buddy in the Women's Army."

This had a devastating effect on Tony Marriott. One moment she had been all fire, all bossy. The next she was a defenceless woman cut to the quick. Her lower lip trembled. "First that horrible Finigan comes. Then *you're* beastly to me. It's not fair." She got up and went click click in the moderately high-heeled shoes she was wearing this evening along the stone verandah and into her room.

Henry was by himself. Oh, dear, he thought. Oh dear. Now I've messed things up. Now she'll go away and leave me; and God knows I'd never get a tiger alone. How would I speak to these apes? He was plunged into gloom.

But her door opened a chink. "If you're determined to go," she gulped, "I'm jolly well coming with you." He only saw her face for a moment—long enough for him to reproach himself afresh, for tears were pouring down either side of her patrician nose.

She has a sense of duty, that girl, Henry thought. She's a good scout. She feels responsible for me. But why the tears for God's sake? She wouldn't be crying just because I told her not to call me Lipton. She doesn't give a damn what I think. I'm just somebody else for her to boss around and satisfy that managerial complex. It must be Finigan. It must be that bucko, Finigan.

The atmosphere at supper was strained; but later they sat again on the verandah with drinks, and came under the spell of the Indian night which is brooding yet gentle yet makes the conventional seem always a little artificial; makes the likes of Marcus Finigan the real

people, the suitable people for that time and that place. Henry and Tony listened to Finigan. He told them stories of his sixteen years in India—of the tigers he had shot, of poaching rhino in Assam for the magical horn to sell to China, of shady deals which left you in no doubt that he was a crook. He told his stories with all those seemingly irrelevant hints of atmosphere that make Irishmen the best raconteurs in the world. He could take you away with him, right away with Marcus Finigan who was the bravest of the brave even if he said so himself, who would pinch his grandmother's photograph frame if he thought there was a good thing in it.

"I'd like to see the tiger-skin," he said finally when he had told many tales.

"They'll have put it away," said Tony. "You can see it in the morning."

"Now's the time to see a fine skin like that. Now this minute."

She looked suspiciously at him; then stood up. "Coming, Henry?"

"O.K." Henry stood up too. But suddenly he didn't want to see that tiger again, not now, not at bed-time when he would start thinking about his stupidities. So he went into his own room, got ready for bed, turned down the light, stood for a moment at the window to watch the moonlight on the hills. It was just then that Finigan and Tony came round the corner of the bungalow, the bulky figure of the man beside Tony; and they were walking in a casual way till Finigan grasped her left hand with his right, swung her round abruptly, took her in his arms, and there they were kissing with the moonlit Himalayas for a backdrop. They must have stood like that, two figures dissolved into one for ten or fifteen seconds, and Tony's arms pale round his neck, until she wrenched herself free in a way that was as startling as the other thing had been. The sound of her slapping his face was like a pistol shot, and the sound of Finigan's laugh was deep and loud.

Henry went thoughtfully to his bed in a corner of the garden. She kisses him back, then she slaps him. Oh, perfidious woman.

He lay awake for a long time, looking at the pale glimmer of the snows, those high cold snows in another world. But even that was a nearer world than the one he had left ten days ago, nearer and more real and much more strange.

Down in the village pi-dogs bayed the moon; and jackals skulked, filling the night with eerie ululation; and now Tony had gone to her bed in the far corner of the garden, and Marcus Finigan to his below the verandah steps. Now the Brain-Fever bird began his song again —Brain-fever, *Brain-Fever*, *BRAIN-FEVER*, and so on up the scale in crescendo, and stop and start again: You're going to die, *You're going to die*, *YOU'RE GOING TO DIE*. Either set of words according to your mood repeated again and again, worse than monotonous, but also a part of the place and a part of the hot weather stretching ahead a little hotter every day and every night. And down in the jungle things were moving.

Here in the garden Henry Lipton was quiet but not asleep; and

over in her corner, Tony Marriott was quiet too but not asleep—the intrepid huntress, the terse martinet, the girl who loathed Marcus Finigan and put her arms round his neck and smacked his face afterwards. Of these three people only the wicked Finigan was sleeping peacefully.

IN the next two days Henry learned something of Finigan's meaning when he had said that hunting man-eaters was a dirty business. He saw blood-stained pieces of cheap cotton which had been clothing. He saw a mangled body half-eaten at the stomach. He saw that everyone was unconcerned by the killing of a sweeper woman, the first victim in this small village at the edge of the foothills. Most of all, however, he observed Marcus Finigan who was not here for pleasure or excitement, but as a matter of business. He made that clear right away next morning as they bumped along in the jeep: "There's the small question of a thousand rupee reward for this Paraudi panther. That would be mine whoever shot the beast."

"Why, of course," said Henry. Tony said nothing.

And Henry watched the jungle virtuosity of this man—how he would slide from shadow to shadow, reading the signs by sight and sound and smell. Tony had the faculty of belonging in stillness; but Finigan belonged there moving or still. He had the alertness of the jungle animals, and many times the cunning.

But all that would fall away from him in the evenings back at the rest-house on the verandah when he told his stories and teased Tony Marriott mercilessly until sooner or later she lost her temper with him. "The trouble about Marcus Finigan," she said angrily to Henry, "is that he's not a gentleman, even if he was born one, which I doubt. Now take you, Li—I mean Henry, you may be different and all that, but you're obviously a gent through and through."

"Yes, lady," said Henry, somewhat irritated by her arrogance.

This third morning, news came of another man-eater kill. The other tiger still had not killed in their block, so Henry and Tony went again with Finigan in his jeep, and he drove very fast.

The woman's death had caused no sorrow among the villagers—only anxiety for their safety. It was different this morning, for the *lambardar*'s, the headman's own son, had been carried off. This morning men and women wailed.

"What happened?" demanded Finigan, jumping out.

"It was my only son, Ram Dass," said the man, who was weeping. "And now he is dead and I am a man without . . ."

"Tell me what happened," interrupted Finigan brutally. "Hurry up."

An hour ago the boy had taken his flock of seven goats along the edge of the jungle where grazing was good. There was no avoidance, for goats must be fed; but the boy had stayed well outside on open ground in full view of the village. Then they had all heard the single scream, and several had seen the black panther disappear into the jungle.

"I tried to go after my son," said the *lambardar*. "But these

people held me back. Now we must go together and fetch him."

"We three will go," said Finigan, "and no one else."

"But sahib, he may still be alive. If he is dead we must save his body. He was my only son . . ."

"He is certainly dead. It is more important to kill the panther."

"God!" said Tony, glaring at him. "Don't be so cold-blooded."

"Don't you be a fool," he said. "Go home if you can't take it. Unless I warn them off they'll chase the panther ten miles away."

"Then you wouldn't get your reward."

He ignored her. "Stay here all you people. I will call you from the jungle. No one is to move until I call. You understand?"

They understood, and were as dominated by this man in his ruthless mood as they were charmed by him at other times when he chose to beguile them.

Finigan went over to the jeep, drank copiously from the pitcher of cold or tepid tea which he always carried with him, picked up his two-forty rifle and loaded it with five in the magazine and one in the breech. *Why d'you use such a small rifle?* Henry had asked, expecting a large man to have a weapon in keeping. *The trajectory is flat up to two hundred, and I can be quicker with it, and it hits nearly as hard.—And if you miss?—Why would I be missing?*

Now he set off past the village well, past a pair of oxen tied up under the big banyan tree, over ground baked and seamed by the sun after sparse irrigation, and so to the jungle edge. Finigan cast about like a deliberate hound. "Here," he said, "here's blood." It was a stain on a dead leaf, the wet redness was out of it already.

"The panther may still be about. Tony, try and keep me in sight so you can cover my back. Henry, you cover Tony's back. If you see it and *I* haven't seen it, click your tongue like a ghooral, like this," Finigan clicked his tongue. "And stand facing it. Don't forget it's black, easy to see except in deep shadow. O.K.?"

Finigan slipped into the jungle. He wore a khaki shirt and shorts, and a deerstalker's hat with a narrow brim all round it. His legs and arms and feet were tanned as brown as the earth. There was no touch of colour about him to catch the eye, and yet the khaki and the darker skin were camouflage, broke that uniformity of colour and shape which more than anything else is suspicious-looking in nature.

He went very slowly, pausing often to listen and to glance down casually at whatever faint trail he was following. But he did not bend down as you might have expected. He walked upright on the balls of his bare feet, with the rifle in his left hand; and every movement was slow, every turn of his head deliberate.

Nothing else was moving on the ground. Only a faint rustle told of a breeze at the tree-tops. It was uncanny. It was not natural for a man to belong so completely in a wild place. You might think there was something wrong about it, something in an extraordinary way that was almost indecent; but you felt greatly relieved to have Finigan there in front of you.

One hundred and fifty human beings written up on that black panther's chart. *Mostly they turn man-eater through hunger—because*

of porcupine quills or old wounds or damaged limbs not being able to hunt fleet-footed game. That was what Finigan said. *But every now and then,* he also said, *you get one that learned the trick from its mother as a cub. And they're the worst, far the worst because they eat human flesh from choice, yet still have the speed and the power. This black panther of Paraudi, he's one of those, and he's the most dangerous sod I ever was up against.*

Henry was thinking uncomfortably about this as he did his best to guard the tail of the procession, looking to either side and round behind his own back where all the nerves of his body seemed to be concentrated in uneasy awareness. And not only did he have to watch behind, but he had to avoid treading on sticks and leaves while he did so. Who would be a rear-guard, he thought unhappily, and realized for the first time why that was every soldier's bugbear. Then he did tread on a stick, and cursed himself and looked guiltily at the great Finigan who had turned with black fury on his black-moustached face ; and Tony gave him an old-fashioned look also, but tempered with a smile when she saw his discomfiture.

So on further, seeing the grace, the lightness, the flowing stealth of Tony's movement. She's as good as Finigan, he thought. Or she moves nearly as well. And I wonder what she feels about following a trail of human blood and a small boy's body at the end of it, one of those lively kids so full of fun and laughter. She'd never speak about that, though. It's not in her code. She wouldn't mention it except for a few clipped words spoken casually to get it out of her system. She may not give a damn for all I know. *What's that?* No, only a log, only a dark log in shadow.

Finigan stopped for a moment at a patch of white, looked intently at it, went on. Tony glanced once, and away. Now here it was, the small boy's loin-cloth, not nice to see, spread along a thorn bush.

God knows why I asked Finigan if I could come. This isn't hunting tigers. This isn't what I've longed to do all my life. This is a dirty game, and dangerous, and I still never fired my rifle in anger. *Don't forget,* Finigan said. *Don't forget that the only study of man an ordinary tiger or panther makes is how to avoid him. But a man-eater is different :* I shan't forget it this burning April morning. I remember it particularly in the back of my neck. This rifle weighs a ton.

Finigan was standing still. He stood for a long time, his small rifle in both hands now, looking at the parched jungle ahead of him. Then he put his right hand behind his back to signal the others up. They were on flat ground, facing north, with small hillsides sloping up gradually on either side.

" See the body," he breathed. " Heard panther. Sit down."

Henry saw the small brown body too, lying so messily that life could not be in it. Then they were sitting back to back in a triangle, Finigan facing the body. Henry heard nothing ; he felt the others breathing, Finigan slowly against his left shoulder, Tony lighter and quicker against his right. The sun filtered down through leaves, laid its hot touch on one of his hands ; otherwise he was in shadow. And it was sunlight and shadow in front of him, a rising slope of broken

scrub and red earth. A jungle crow perched on a tree, cawed in a way that was unexpectedly familiar, flew off scolding.

A rustle somewhere behind him, and the faintest stir in Tony's shoulder, none in Finigan's. Keep still. A growl. Was it a growl? He could get within thirty feet of me, I guess. But he won't do that. *They come from behind.* He can't get at us from behind. He'll circle us wide if he comes at all. But we must have driven him from the kill. *Their boldness and their cunning*, said Finigan. *The boldness gives you a chance sometimes. The cunning takes it away.*

Henry had been staring at one patch of deep shadow for several minutes before the panther's head suddenly formed for him. A coal-black head with pale steady eyes, and a part of the body there now too, not jet black—nigger brown with black spots.

How far? Forty yards perhaps. Shall I fire? Nobody told me. Nobody said fire or don't fire, and I can't ask. If I fire I'll miss, and we'll never get near him again. But if I didn't fire at forty yards I'd be crazy. Just at the base of head and neck. Yes, I must.

Henry's rifle was pointing in that direction, but it was down on his knees. He raised it now; began to raise it carefully with infinite slowness, and he felt a stir in the other shoulders behind him as they realized what he was doing.

Now I'm just coming up. Now the ivory tip of the foresight down at the bottom of the wide V, coming into it, hold my breath, aim an inch low at the neck, squeeze it.

The panther moved perhaps a fifth of a second before the striker dented the cap of the shell in the right barrel, and the big rifle thundered and punched Henry's shoulder viciously.

Before the echoes had died away in the jungle, Finigan was on his feet, rifle at the aim. But he did not fire, and the panther went crashing snarling unseen towards the hills.

"He moved as I fired," said Henry, surprised at his own calmness. "Thought I hit him." He had a vivid picture of the black body rippling into movement from right to left beyond the sights, and the hindquarters slewing over for a second and rising again. "Sorry."

"You hit him," said Finigan. "I heard the strike. Was he lying?"

"Yes. Sort of crouched, half facing me."

"And he rose and moved as you fired?"

"Yes."

"Probably hit him low behind."

He went over fast; found the spot; found blood and a piece of dark fur. "I think you raked him underneath," he said. "Belly fur. The bullet couldn't have gone right in and opened properly; otherwise there'd be a hell of a mess from a blunderbuss like that thing. Pity you weren't quicker."

"Sorry," said Henry again, although he was not particularly sorry; he knew that he had done the right thing, even if he might have been a second quicker.

"Now he'll be properly stirred up," said Finigan. "If he's damaged enough to have to rest somewhere near, then we're going

to have a pantomime. We're going to have a merry hullabaloo."

He drew a rough map in the dust. It was shaped like a wedge or triangle. "He's gone north towards the head of the wedge, and that's where these two hillsides come together. It's a ravine there, just below the crest, steep either side, thick jungle in the middle. What's he going to do? Doesn't know this country well, does he? Probably the first time he's been here. If he's hurt a little bit, he's going to take the easiest way, level as far as he can go, and in cover. The alternative is to cut up the open hillsides right or left; I don't believe he'll do that till he has to at the head of the triangle, and the odds are he'll have to rest before he gets there. I'll wait and follow him in a few minutes."

"Suppose one of us went wide," said Tony, "and round to the head of the ravine to wait for him. Then if he broke out there might be a chance of a shot."

Finigan went back to look again at the mutilated body. "Go and fetch that bit of cloth, Henry."

By the time Henry had fetched the cloth from the thorn bush Finigan had moved the body into deeper cover. Tony stood a little apart. She was very white under her tan.

"Cover it up." Finigan watched while Henry did that unpleasant task. Then he smiled at Tony, or he sneered at her; Finigan wasn't exactly a drawing-room character.

"I told you it was a dirty affair, Tony."

"Aren't you going to let them fetch the body now?"

"No."

"Why not?"

But he ignored the question. "I think one of you had better go round to the ravine. You go, Henry."

"Okay."

"Just a minute." Tony hesitated. "I don't think . . . I don't think Henry ought to go round there alone."

"You go with him, then," said Finigan. "Go and look after one another. You'll be safer with Henry than with Finigan in the bushes."

"He's too inexperienced to be alone," said Tony. But her face went red. She looked as if she was struggling with a complicated problem.

Finigan laughed heartily. He was extracting some private joke out of all this. "And what about your own inexperience, Tony Marriott? Go on now, the pair of you. I'll give you time."

Tony and Henry climbed out of the low ground, moved wide along the right hillside where there was no ground cover, but only sparse trees and rocky outcrop.

"What's the trouble, Tony?" She was still frowning.

"It's that—," she said in distress. "I have to look after you. And I'm not scared of following any panther, but I'm damned if I'll stay alone with Finigan. He's a menace."

Henry laughed. The thought of the fearless Tony being afraid of Finigan's advances was funny. "Surely you'd be safe enough with that panther lurking."

" You don't know Finigan," she said bitterly.

" He hypnotizes you," said Henry. " And I guess you enjoy it."

He spoke jokingly, but she turned on him. " I do *not* enjoy it."

" Why let him kiss you, then ? "

" Oh," she said. " Oh. So you . . . That was only once. He's an attractive brute, but I dislike him intensely."

" Well, don't encourage him if you dislike him."

" I'm human you know, Lipton," she said in a small voice. " Even if you're not. And I don't see why you say I encourage him."

" Finigan's a great man in his way," said Henry. He hadn't meant the conversation to take this turn into intensity.

" He's a great animal. Far as I'm concerned, you're a much greater man than Finigan."

" Who, me ? " Henry was flabbergasted.

" Yes, you."

But time to stop talking, for the hillside was steeper, forcing them down to the left, and walking difficult now beside red rocks too hot to touch. Below on the left was the wedge-shaped patch of jungle narrowing into the ravine, which ended abruptly ahead where it met the main east-west mass of the foothills. It was a valley in miniature, with a dry watercourse running down the centre of it between dusty green and brown thickets, a valley but with nothing of the lush connotation of that word.

Now that you saw the ground you realized why Finigan expected the panther to be still in the valley bottom, for it was unlikely that a wounded animal would break willingly up those almost precipitous sides.

" We'll sit below that tree at the end," she whispered. " We can get along under the rock-face."

" Hadn't we better go above it ? " It was a dead dry heat. There were no signs of life anywhere, no birds, no monkeys, no warnings of panther, but Henry had a sudden sharp premonition of danger, one of those premonitions you have, and almost every time they turn out to be wrong.

" No, below."

" I'll lead, then."

" No, I'll lead."

" You're the bossiest damned . . ." Henry started to say. This girl always knew best, and his sense of danger was acute now. But he stopped himself. " Oh, all right. Go ahead."

She gave him a stricken look ; the sudden defenceless look which he had seen once before. But she went ahead ; they were slipping along below the rock-face, and the tree they were making for at the head of the ravine was only fifty yards away.

I don't like it, Henry thought again. If he did break up the hill, this is just the place he'd lie. He went close behind her ; they turned another corner, and what had been a solid wall of rock was not solid any more but broken by a cleft a few feet wide, and perhaps fifteen in length. At the top of it was the black panther.

It crouched in baleful flatness. Henry saw the slit cat-eyes, the

whiskers, the snarl breaking, a whisk of the long tail. He saw all that in a small fraction of a second before the panther charged.

Henry acted. No ordinary process of thought told him to do the two distinct things which he now did like lightning.

With his left hand he punched Tony hard in the back, knocked her flying. With his right in an access of strength he raised the heavy rifle, left hand on the barrels again, facing the panther, a lifetime of things happening in a moment, and he fired both barrels together.

The roar of the rifle, the recoil hitting him, the black fury in mid air, the fetid stink, the hot impact, the floating, the white flaming thunder in his head. Now blackness.

TONY was off her guard. I didn't mean to be bossy, she thought miserably, rounding the corner of the rock. I didn't mean to . . . Then something heavy and painful hit her in the small of the back, and she had that feeling of surprised resentment as she fell forward; out of the corner of her right eye she caught sight of the panther crouched in the familiar way which rang loud bells of warning so that she twisted before she reached the ground and was facing Henry again when his rifle went off with a double near-simultaneous report.

She saw him rocked back on his heels by the recoil. She saw the sleek black body at full extension pile into the muzzle of the rifle. She saw panther, rifle and Henry in his topi describe a not ungraceful parabola over the edge and down out of sight.

The panther straddled him, covered his body, and the rifle lay beside, broken at the small of the butt. She saw that also; then she drew her hunting knife, went down headlong one two three flying steps and plunged it once twice three times in out, through fur, skin, flesh, muscle behind the shoulder, right deep in six inches, and again and again, tremors in the black body, and she knew it was dead. Just for that moment she felt a surge of exultation.

She heaved at the panther, rolled it off, seeing by the gaping hole in the chest that it must have been killed instantaneously. Henry was covered with blood, all over the front of him.

"Henry! Henry!" She was quiet again while she felt for and found the pulse beating slow, very slow, but beating.

She rose, cupped her hands. "Finigan! Quick, Finigan!" But her voice was tiny in the bigness, the deadness of the heat.

She took her handkerchief now, wiped his face, no wound there, no more blood coming, ashen-pale and still. There was only one wound, a long claw mark at the top of the right arm, a deep gouge.

Henry had fallen on to broken stones, not very large; but close on two hundred pounds of panther had piled on top of him, and the two bodies had slid twenty feet down the steep slope to rock at the bottom. His pith topi was pulped, broken up. *His head*, she thought, kneeling over him, exploring gently with her fingers, finding the bump on the crown. "Oh, Henry! Don't die, Henry." And she held his head in her hands. "It's my fault. I did it. Oh damn!"

Then a thud of feet, and here was Finigan panting. He gave one fleeting look at the panther, then pushed her out of the way and knelt beside Henry. Finigan arriving was what did it. "His head and his arm," she said. "My fault. All my fault." She was quiet for perhaps half a minute while Finigan examined him. Then she began to laugh. "Shut up!" said Finigan. But she went on laughing.

He only half-turned his head, raised his hairy left hand and smacked her twice cruelly across the face, back and forwards. "Shut up, you. Bring the rifles." He bent again, ripped the sleeve off Henry's shirt, bound it tightly round the gash, took him in his arms, picked his way over stones, then loped off down the nullah.

Tony followed. Her legs had gone weak on her, but she forced them to work. Thank God for Marcus Finigan, that big lusty bull carrying Henry at a run as if he weighed nothing. Now they had passed the small white-covered body; now they were reaching the edge of the jungle where the villagers were clustered, now her lungs weren't going to be able to take it. Finigan stopped, told them where the boy lay, told them to fetch the panther, ran across the burning midday plain, and here was the jeep.

He dumped Henry in the right-hand seat. "Hold him up." Tony got in the back and leaned over to hold him. He was still unconscious, head lolling sideways with the ridiculous crushed topi still hanging round his neck by the chin-strap.

"Head doesn't seem much," panted Finigan. "Concussion, I think. That arm's a different story. I'm going fast. Try and keep his head off the back of the seat."

She put her arm under his head.

"What happened?"

She told him, not sparing herself the blame. "He must have knocked me out of the way. The panther piled into the muzzle of the rifle, which probably saved him from being mauled worse. Then I saw it lying right on top of him. Couldn't fire."

"So you knifed it?" He looked at her with the bland half-smile on his face which usually annoyed her.

Tony had forgotten that. "Yes Yes, I did. How d'you know?"

"Saw the knife. You're a killer, Tony. Always said so."

"It was dead already."

But Henry stirred now, muttered, then spoke quite clearly into her ear: "It's a surprise for you, Caroline."

"What did he say?"

"Mumbled something." Caroline! Who's Caroline? Jealousy seethed in Tony Marriott for a second. Henry had gone limp again.

They turned off the *kachcha* road, up the village street.

"I'm going to cauterize that arm. You take his shirt off. Wash him. Don't waste time."

And here they were. Finigan carried Henry quickly, roughly to his room, put him on the bed, ran off. The bearer came with water and a sponge. She washed the top of his body, not a particularly muscular body but her own for this minute if never again, the strange

American Henry Lipton with the handsome face, a humble person not like an American, and strong although he thought he was weak.

She wiped the long gash on his arm where one claw only, bared from its putrid sheath, had dug the poison deep, the most deadly certain cause of septicæmia, as she knew and Finigan knew.

Finigan put the charcoal brazier on the floor, drew out the glowing knife, looked at it, seemed satisfied. "You okay?"

"Yes."

"Better hold him in case he moves."

She put one hand on each shoulder, thumbs in the wet armpits, leaned all her weight on Henry and watched his face. But he was out cold while the red-hot metal seared the tissues, and smoke and intolerable smell were in her nostrils.

"I'll do it again." Now waiting till the knife was ready. I'm not going to faint. I'm not going to. He's doing it now. No, I'm not going to. Henry stirred, turned his head back and forward across the pillow."

"That'll do," said Finigan. "Good girl. I'll go for a doctor."

IT was the summer he was eight. *Promise you'll be careful, Henry darling.* So he had promised. He got up early before breakfast to dig clams, and found a good place in the mud where plenty of big holes spurted water at the touch of the clam fork, and he did not take long to fill the small pail.

Then out on the long wharf in the morning, the white sardine-boats swung at anchor to face the Fundy tide, the sun was warm, and he was off to catch flounders all on his lonesome for the first time.

But sculpins were more eager than the flounders. After you'd caught five or six of those horny, dirty brutes and cut out the hook and kicked them back off the wharf so that they fell into the water with a splash, you felt awfully sick and fed up for a minute, wondering if you ever would get a flounder. But other boys were catching flounders and harbour pollock. Then Cap'n Brown who was sitting on the bench, he came over and said: *You're not deep enough, Henry. Pay out till you feel bottom. Then raise it two feet and wait patient.*

Well, it was wonderful what Cap'n Brown knew, for the next minute there was the different swaying swimmy feeling down on the end of the line out of sight in green water. You pulled in so fast the water spurted through your hands, and you could see the big flatness of him now; here he was up beside you flapping on the wooden wharf. Open a new clam and bait again with the good yellowy pulpy bit, and oh golly, big brown flounders with white tummies.

The score was five and you were rebaiting. You could get a nickel a flounder at O'Neill's so that was a quarter already, or you could take them home for Mummy to admire. You were just wondering which would be best when you took a forgetful step back, caught your heel against the edge of the wharf, and fell backwards on and on for ever and ever, legs kicking above you, never-ending but ending in the shock of cold or was it heat, and Cap'n Brown fished you

out and sent you home dripping wet. *I didn't want you to go, Henry. I knew it would happen. You're never to fish alone again.*

" Mummy's darling," he said as he woke up in the white-washed room with shutters closed and chinks of white light and the most god-awful pain in his head. He put his hand up to find that pain behind the damp cloth on his forehead.

" Hullo, Henry," said Tony Marriott of all people. She took the cloth away and brought it back wet and cold.

" Lo, Tony." He remembered something very odd about a black panther, and falling off the wharf in Canada that summer into coldness so cold it could be heat or vice-versa. Then he remembered something more and the gun going off. " You okay ? "

She smiled down at him, different from herself, quite gentle. " I'm all right. How d'you feel ? "

" I feel like hell. What happened to the panther ? "

" You knocked me out of the way. Then you killed it."

" Dead as mutton ? "

" Dead as a door-nail."

" I didn't like that kid all chewed up. Did you or did you ? "

" No, I didn't." She shivered, came nearer, went away.

It wasn't only his head. He had another pain up in his arm somewhere, so he put his left hand over to find out about that.

But she stopped him. " You got . . . you got scratched, Lipton. Don't touch it."

" Bossy."

" I don't want to be bossy." She took her hand away, but that wasn't what he wanted because it was a comfort, and a woman's supple hand although bossy, and you needed a woman's hand, any woman's hand.

So he said : " You're a good guy, Tony." He had an excuse to feel for her hand again and hold it just because of the two pains competing, or did they sort of balance, the two pains ?

" D'you want a drink ? "

" Yes, I do."

" Here's some *nimbu pani*." It was a sweet coolness of *nimbu*, of fresh limes and sugar.

But Finigan was filling up the room, and a man with him, an Indian fellow. He was the one who came close now. He had those dark sad suffering eyes they have. " I will make examination," he said in an up and down voice like the water on a calm morning against the piles of the wharf. You knew his dark hands with pale pink palms would be gentle. So they were, as gentle as light as fluttering as butterflies all around the sore place on top, apologetic hands.

" There is bruise. There is concussion, but no sign of fracture. So far so excellent." Then it was the arm. " You cauterized ? "

And Marcus Finigan loomed up. He was so big and filling the place and healthy that you didn't like to have him near you. " Yes."

" Deeply ? "

" Yes, deeply twice."

"Splendid. Now I will clean again and dress. Tomorrow I will suture."

"What is suture, for God's sake?"

"Suture is stitch, Mr. Lipton, sir."

After that it was cleaning, very painful; and the Indian doctor did hate to hurt you so he groaned in sympathy and beads of sweat were all over his countenance; then a penicillin injection. And lastly a very small pill which gradually, surely, pushed the two pains back into neutral corners, and all thoughts were vague except one powerful thought very strong.

The doctor had gone away.

"Go to sleep, Henry," said Marcus. "You're a tough scoundrel. You're as good a man as Finigan."

"Where's Tony? Now listen, Tony," he said distinctly and imperiously. "I came here to shoot a tiger, been waiting all my life to do it, and we're wasting time. Go and see about it right away."

"Yes, Henry. If you go to sleep, I'll see Bhagwan now."

"Seeing *Bhagwan* isn't enough. *Do* something. Don't be so goddam English."

But that faded too, and he was going away, he was going down the river, rolling down the river with his mother and Cap'n Brown and Caroline and old Bhagwan and Marcus Finigan and Tony Marriott, Senior Commander, Queen of the Jungle.

"PROGRESS satisfactory," said the doctor two mornings later. "Danger of septicaemia recedes. Now I may leave Mr. Lipton in your loving care." He gave Tony instructions for dressing the arm, told her how to get hold of him in emergency, said he would be back in three days, and departed as humbly as he had come.

"Loving care," she muttered irritably, then laughed at herself for being annoyed by what was only a flowery mode of speech. That was how they learned English, in chunks of related words whose union was indissoluble—thus care was always loving, a certainty was dead certain, safety was safe as houses. And care has to be loving, she said to herself. It isn't even as if he was the least bit grateful for anything I do. All he does is grumble and go on about tigers and talk about giving that woman surprises in his sleep.

But here was Mohammed Khan. "*Chitthi*, Miss sahib," he said, and went away again.

The letter was for *Mr. Henry Lipton, c/o American Travel, New Delhi.* It was an airmail special delivery letter from the United States, postmarked Charleston ten days ago. It was just a letter for Henry in a large round elegant hand. But somehow that unmistakably feminine writing made her uneasy. She was more uneasy when she turned over the envelope and saw the return address: Caroline Dwight Lancaster, Hotel Splendide, Charleston, S.C.

It's that woman; it must be that woman. I've a damned good mind to read it. I ought to read it. She's sure to be pleading with him to come back, otherwise why special delivery? Or she's threaten-

ing to do away with herself. He's in no condition to be worried by such things.

She tried to see through the envelope, but that was unchallengeably expensively opaque. She put it down, pondering ways and means of steaming letters open and closing them again without detection. Miss Marriott had been to the best girls' school in England, where such shady tricks as reading other people's letters would have meant public contumely and instant expulsion ; but she was troubled now by no pettifogging code of honour. She was an elemental woman, the daughter of bold Norman barons who had not conquered by softness. And even if she knew that Henry didn't care a damn about her, she was not going to allow this Caroline woman to make him miserable. Or to be quite honest with herself, it was the jungle, tooth and claw, mostly claw. If she herself could not win the gentle enigmatic savage Henry, then she would do her best to spoil Caroline what's-her-name's chances. But it would not do to be caught out. So much for the veneer of civilization, so much for suave aristocracy.

She was looking out of the window and thinking so hard about this that she scarcely noticed the arrival of Marcus Finigan in her room, scarcely noticed his bulk beside her and his large and expert hand at the curve of her waist. But the hand was not quiescent, so she did soon have cause to notice him and broke out of his grasp.

" Don't paw at me, Finigan," she said absent-mindedly. The last two days had worked a remarkable change in her chemistry, so that Finigan was no longer an aggressive unpleasantly desirable enemy. The fact was that he left her cold now.

" I have to be on my way, Tony," he said. " So here I am with a broken heart. What's this ? " He picked up the letter, turned it over, put it down, and guffawed. Finigan's wits were sharp. " And you were just after thinking would you open it and see what the other woman has to say. Now isn't that right ? I heard him speak her name in the jeep although you thought I didn't."

" Well, what of it ? "

" Want my advice ? "

" No."

" You can have it free and for nothing. Don't steam any letters open because it's a difficult thing to do well in this climate. And don't be trying sharp practices on Henry. He's an honourable chap, and he wouldn't understand your methods. He doesn't know what Finigan knows about women."

" He doesn't need to."

" It's me you should be sighing for, Tony. It's me would be the suitable mate for you, even if I might not be offering you my lily-white hand in matrimony." Finigan held up his lily-white hand, looked at it and dropped it again. " You and me is soul-mates. Well, I must be on my road. I'll be dropping past again in a few days' time."

" Where are you going ? "

" There's an awkward little matter of business in Ambala. But don't worry, Tony. Don't be anxious for me."

" I won't be."

He seized her in his arms, kissed her powerfully, went to the door and turned. " Never say die, Tony. There's many a queer thing happens to a man weakened with sickness."

That fool, she thought. But I suppose he's right. I suppose it would be a mistake. And he's sure to mention the letter to Henry next time he comes. He'll just drop a hint in that sly way of his to see if he can catch me out. Oh, hell's bells.

She took the letter into Henry's darkened room. He was a great deal better already, but he still had a most painful headache, so he was petulant, not at all like his easy-going self; he growled at her almost every time she went in.

" How d'you feel, Henry ? "

" I feel lousy," he said in a strong and disagreeable voice ; but she liked to hear it after that faint whisper the first day.

The old-fashioned punkah creaked above his bed, back and forward, back and forward, giving a measure of relief. This was a really hot day, a hundred and ten outside on the shaded verandah, but in here it was a little better, with the dry air in motion. Henry was naked to the waist except for his bandage. " That punkah-wallah sleeps half the time," he grumbled. " He's lazy, like all these apes."

" Don't call them apes," she said sharply.

" Figure of speech. You're an ape. I'm an ape. We're all apes."

" Gotta letter for you."

" What would anyone write *me* a letter for ? Who's it from ? "

" Caroline Dwight Lancaster, it says on the back."

" Never heard of her."

" It's airmail special delivery," said Tony. She put it down on the bedside table, put it down rather reluctantly.

" Well, I don't know what it is. Could you read it to me ? It's too dark here."

She took the letter over to the window, opened the shutter a crack, tore the flap of the envelope, drew out a single sheet and glanced frenziedly at it.

" Go on," said Henry crossly. " What are you waiting for ? "

" ' *My darling Henry,*' " she began reading.

" *Who* d'you say it was from ? "

She told him the name again. " It's from someone who's just been married." It was too late to stop now, but Tony was suddenly full of the most biting remorse. She was going to read him a letter from this woman he was in love with, and here he was in bed and in no condition to stand a shock. Damn Finigan, she thought. I ought to have opened it.

" Caroline married ? Good God ! Read it ! "

" ' *My darling Henry,*' " she started again painfully.

" ' *You are so far away there in India that I wonder if this letter will ever reach you. Just the same I know you would never forgive me if I didn't write to tell you my news, and it might be a shock if you heard it from someone else. Dwight and I are MARRIED. He*

came back a fortnight ago from Hungary to be a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department. We met at the Barovias and it was like Vesuvius or something. He literally SWEPT me off my feet.'"

"You bet he did," growled Henry at this point. "Go on."

"'*After that it was a WHIRLWIND courtship, and the days flew by, and suddenly we were married and here we are at Charleston on our honeymoon. Oh, such blissful happiness to see the ocean rollers with the man you love! It's as if I was a woman reborn, and I know that you, dear generous Henry, will wish me happiness. Lovingly, Caroline.*'"

"There's a P.S.," said Tony unhappily. "'*P.S.—Please say we can always be friends, Henry. Better FRIENDS than ever.*' Second friends is underlined."

Henry groaned deeply. "God," he muttered in a strangled voice. "It's not possible!"

Tony closed the shutter again and put the letter down beside him. She hovered for a moment, wanting to give him comfort; but his eyes were closed and his face shut off from her. There was nothing she could do. At this moment she felt no elation that her rival should be safely occupied with a new husband and the ocean rollers at a place called Charleston; she felt only a loathing for women, for all treacherous fickle women including herself.

"How is it that women in love can be guilty of such unbelievable solecisms?" said Henry with his eyes still closed.

Solecisms? What did that mean? No dictionary here; no education at that silly school. But she had to know. "What's *solecisms*?" she asked. "Is it . . . is it sort of cruelty?"

"You could call it that," said Henry. He opened his eyes, stared at her, but she knew from the clouded look that he was thinking of something else. "What's the news from old Bhagwan?"

"There haven't been any kills yet."

"Jerk him up, Tony, will you? I've *got* to get a tiger."

"Yes, Henry."

She went off to find Bhagwan. He would be sound asleep in the noonday heat. But it was important. It was doubly important now for darling Henry to shoot a tiger. That was how jilted men regained their self-respect. She knew the tiger must come first. Then afterwards perhaps there might be a slender hope for her. Far from being arrogant, Miss Marriott was really a very humble girl, misunderstood like many of her countrymen.

HENRY'S bed was on the verandah. He had just finished his breakfast and was drinking another glass of iced coffee and smoking a cigarette. He had nothing to grumble about. He was nearly well again. His head no longer ached; the damaged arm had only a mild healing tickle. No, he felt fine; he felt amazingly healthy considering that it was only eight days since his contretemps with the black panther. *My contretemps*, he thought with a wave of pleased conceit. It was a nice feeling that now at last he would be able to listen to other people's tales of glamour and glory, and all the

time he would have his own story up his sleeve, not to be told except with reluctance after many protests. But that was a fanciful idea also, because he knew himself well enough to be aware that he, being Henry Lipton, an alloy of modesty and hypocrisy, would never breathe a word to a soul about the black panther.

All these thoughts were pleasant enough on this hot morning, but they were the mere contradictory outer trappings of a melancholy which seemed to etch itself more deeply into him each day.

He was waiting for Tony now. He watched for the first sign of her on the driveway winding down to the village road. But when she did come, it was not from that direction. His eyes caught movement in front, and here she was on the narrow path which led up from the jungle. She came silently as usual, a cool tawny-haired shadow, rifle on her shoulder, moving from the dimness into bright sunlight, one step flowing into the next with graceful deliberate purpose. And once more he had that odd sensation of familiarity, of someone or something seen before, another time; or probably it was only Tony Marriott herself who was familiar, and he was remembering this thing about her which he had seen so many times in the last weeks.

She looked at him all the way across the lawn, looked fixedly but did not speak until she had stepped with a long brown ripple of thigh from the ground up to the stone verandah.

"Gotta kill," she said. "Gotta kill at last."

"That's swell," said Henry. "Where?" His discontent faded. It was inaction had been the trouble. That was all it must have been.

"Know the big peepul beyond the waterhole? You go up a rise and you come to the tree with a sort of small glade beyond it. Well, that's a good crossing-point, and I've been tying up there the last two nights. Tiger was on the kill when we got there. Hadn't dragged at all. Growled and went off."

"Was it a big one?"

"Never saw it. Ground's too hard for pugmarks. There are two in the block now, a big one and a smaller. Could have been either."

"You're sure it was a tiger?"

"Yes. Killed at the back of the neck. Began eating the shoulder. Yes, certain. We can't have a beat, though, on that high ground. Have to sit up for it."

Tony seemed restless. She walked off to the end of the verandah, turned and came back slowly, still staring at him.

"I wish you wouldn't stalk me that way," said Henry, irritated again. He was grateful for all she had done for him, but lately she kept looking at him in an oddly disturbing manner, almost as if she was plotting, and it made him uncomfortable. After all, pals don't stare; they hardly bother to look at one another's faces.

"I was just wondering," she said hastily, "whether you'll be able to climb the tree. If you pull with that arm you're certain to bust the stitches."

"Can't I sit on the ground?"

" With one arm out of commission ? No, you certainly cannot."

" What about a ladder, then ? "

" Are you sure you can climb a ladder with one arm ? " From her eager look, he knew how much she wanted him to get his tiger.

" Easy," he said. " Done it often." Which was not true. But now that his goal was in sight, now he had a confidence in himself that he never had before, he could certainly climb any ladder with one hand. He was longing to hear more about this tiger.

" Well, that's splendid. I'd better be going." She turned away.

" Where are you going *now* ? " No sooner here than off again ; restless all the time. Henry allowed an edge to creep into his voice.

But she rounded on him : " Don't bully me, Henry. If I come, you say I stalk you. If I go, you say where am I going *now* in that nasty voice. Everything I do is wrong. I'm going to have breakfast if you want to know. *I* haven't been lying about in bed till eight o'clock."

She flounced off, if so graceful and dynamic a creature could be said to flounce, and left Henry to think that over. I'm still a sick man, he said to himself in a moment of self-pity. But perhaps I am a bit disagreeable. Perhaps I'd better get up now.

There was tension between the jungle partners.

THE next thing that happened on that momentous day was the arrival of a deputation from the panther village. Tony went out to investigate, came back and closed the door.

" It's the *lambardar*," she whispered. " Him and another man. They've brought you a letter and two young goats and some milk."

" Well, for God's sake," said Henry. " Why ? "

" Token of esteem. You'll have to accept them gratefully."

" Accept two young goats gratefully ? But I'm allergic to goat."

" They're poor people. You might be able to give back the goats."

Henry was not prepared for the dignity of the ceremony which followed. There was a touching absurdity about it.

The door opened ; the *lambardar* stood there in his khaki-drill jacket with brass buttons. He took off his shoes, came into the room, raised both hands to his head, salaamed deeply, drew a letter from his pocket and handed it to Henry.

It was a sheet of foolscap, written in babu English.

" Most honred and rispected Lipton sir bravest of the brave," it began ; went on in the same strain, and finished with a vow of eternal gratitude and devotion. At the bottom were a few hieroglyphics and many thumbprints.

Henry was just going to say thank-you when the *lambardar* began to speak. Tony interpreted for him.

" He says that he has lost his only son and is full of sorrow. But he wants to tell you that he is not less grateful to you because of that. He and the other people of the village will never forget that you killed the panther. They will pray for you always and remember your bravery. They thank God for your recovery. They ask you to accept these humble presents. . . . Make them a formal speech," added Tony in the same voice. " They mean every word of it."

Henry found it difficult to think of anything except the small sprawling body of the child. He was very much touched.

At length he said slowly: "Tell him that I also mourn for his son. Give him my sympathy. Say that what I did was a small thing. Tell him that I shall soon be going back to my own country far away, but that I shall never forget the kindness of these people."

She repeated this. Then the two playful kids and a jar of milk were presented to him, and the milk retained but the goats presented back with due formality, as gravely accepted, and the *lambardar* departed.

"You couldn't have done it better," said Tony.

"Well, well." Henry was still confused. "What they want to do that for?" He said it more to himself than to her.

"Because you're their hero. If you want to know, Lipton, you're going to be a legend in that village."

"Me a legend? I dunno what else I could have done."

"Well, they heard how you saved my life, not that that's much. Also you were mauled by *and* you killed a panther which had bumped off a hundred and fifty people."

"I punched you in the back was all I did," said Henry.

THE great Finigan arrived soon afterwards from Ambala. He blew into the Rest-house sitting room as dusty and hairy and unbuttoned as ever. Perhaps his energy was the most startling thing about him in that country at that time of year, when men and animals, even the flies, are lethargic and drowsy with heat.

"How's the wounded hero?" He clapped Henry on the back.

"Sit down, Finigan," said Tony. "Relax. Try not to be a bull-elephant." But she gave him a nervous smile. She's been longing to see him, Henry thought. That's what's been wrong with her.

"As for you, Tony darling, you look wore out with those dark circles under your eyes. Were you pining for me? Is that it?"

She frowned, began to rise from her chair, and subsided again. "Never been better in my life."

Tony was right, of course, Henry thought. Finigan's no gentleman. He's an ill-bred fellow, playing fast and loose like that with her affections.

"How much longer will you be staying?" asked Finigan after Tony had told him about the new tiger kill.

"My plane leaves next week," she said, started to sigh, and stopped herself.

"I guess I'd better be getting back too," said Henry. "I'd better be getting back as soon as I shoot a tiger." *To my own country far away.* It certainly does seem far away.

"I suppose you'll be out of touch here," said Finigan casually. "I mean you won't have had any mail."

Tony got up and left the room. Finigan watched her; then turned to look at Henry.

"No. Oh yes, I did have one letter." He burst out laughing. "It

was from a girl I know and she got married. It's incredible what they write when they're in a honeymoon ecstasy. Said she was watching the ocean rollers with the man she loved. An awfully nice girl, but about as sophisticated a number as you could imagine, so it came as a surprise."

"Bless their little hearts," said Finigan. "Love does wonders for them. Take Tony now; she's calmed down something wonderful."

"I don't think you're very fair to Tony," said Henry on the spur of the moment. "I don't think it's fair to make her miserable and then say things like that about her appearance. In fact, if you want to know what I think, Marcus, I think you ought to leave her alone." Henry wasn't the man to stand in the way of true love; but Finigan was the last person in the world for a girl to get entangled with. If Tony, his partner, felt responsible for him, he also felt responsible for her. He studied his toes in some embarrassment, while a look of astonishment and unholy glee came over Finigan's face.

"There's just one little thing, Henry," he said, changing the subject again. "It's about the reward for shooting that panther."

"Oh yes. Did you collect it?"

"I applied, but there was a cold answer saying they had reason to understand it was somebody else killed the beast, and would I produce signed testimony." Finigan fetched writing paper and a pen. A lesser man might have shown some diffidence in this matter, but not Finigan. "You wouldn't mind, Henry, would you?"

"You're leaving now. You're not going to stay here?"

"No, I'm off in a couple of minutes."

"O.K.," said Henry. "Tell me what to write."

Finigan told him what to write. Then Henry signed his first false statement. It was a bargain after all, but he wondered what his partner Horace, of the distinguished law firm of Traversy, Coolican, Boulding, Lipton and Altmeister would have thought of such a mendacious bargain, or of the character it was made with.

"Tony!" bellowed Finigan. "Where are you, Tony?"

She came in warily.

"Sign this please, Tony my cabbage."

She read it through. "I must say you've got a nerve," she said angrily. "Considering Henry was mauled by the brute, considering the doctor's bill and everything. I won't sign it."

"Now Tony. That's not like you at all."

"Better sign it," said Henry.

"I won't sign it."

"That letter you and me was talking about . . ." Finigan began gently.

She stiffened. He didn't have anything on her, did he? She hadn't admitted a thing. She hadn't opened the letter. But he could say she had, and how would Henry know the truth, how would Henry ever be able to trust her again? Poor Henry with his heart broken by that woman. She signed the paper.

"A million thanks," said Finigan. "I hope you get your tiger,

Henry. You're a good chap, worth ten of these perfidious English." He advanced on Tony. "All the best, Tony Marriott, you angry little thing. I wish you good luck. I wish you good hunting although you don't deserve it. And if I broke your heart, don't blame me, blame the fatal charm of the Finigans." He chucked her under the chin and departed in an excellent humour, leaving Tony speechless with indignation, and Henry appalled; in fact leaving the cat among the pigeons, as in his lighter moods he dearly loved to do.

A WIND was blowing that afternoon. It blew out of a cloudless sky; and perhaps high above the earth there was the crystal blueness of clean wind. But down below, the air was leaden brown, the withered leaves flew and had no beauty. It was the violent furnace-wind of India, arid and intolerable.

"Ready, Henry?" Tony looked at him anxiously. He was pale, and his face seemed thinner than it had been this morning.

"Let's get going," he said. He didn't feel bad considering his time in bed and the unpleasantness of the afternoon. In fact he felt pretty good; he was in that exalted withdrawn condition of mind which comes to a man when he has a great purpose close before him.

They went down the deserted village street, covering their noses against the dust which came in multi-particled solidity with the wind probing into ears and mouth and hot dry tingling down the neck.

Bhagwan was waiting at the jungle path. He stood up and made a profound obeisance to Henry.

"He says he hopes the great brave sahib is well again," said Tony. If there was a hint of irony in her voice, she did not allow it to show in her facial expression. It was not that she felt jealous of Henry's gain in stature, just that she realized how masculine hearts had bounded with relief when he had proved himself to be no mere stooge, when he had restored the rightful order of things. From now on she knew that if she gave an order all eyes would turn instinctively, malely, to Henry for confirmation. Men are all the same, she said to herself. Men are awful; and I loathe women. She stood aside for him to lead on the path. If he went ahead he could set his own pace.

"You go on, Tony."

"No, you."

"Listen," he said absently. "What's the argument? I don't know the way."

So she went ahead, and one half of her mind was angry at him for implying bossiness; and the other half was worried, thinking that she should not have allowed him to come shooting when he was still an invalid. Then she gave her attention to the jungle. It was different today, not sombrely brooding with life and death, with silence and sudden noise, with movement and stillness. It was moving all the time, trees creaking, leaves rustling; so the ear and the eye were deceptive servants; all the animals would be a little more uneasy than usual, and she herself was strange in the place she loved.

"Besides," said Henry unexpectedly from behind, "I'm used to following you. I like it. I like the stealthy way you gum-shoe along."

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It isn't my nice shape he likes, she thought resentfully, knowing that hers was a very nice shape. Oh no ; the only thing he likes about me is that I'm useful, that I help him to get this tiger he's so fanatical about because of Caroline. Then he'll go back to America and send me a Christmas card the first year but not the second. I hate the way he bosses me by saying I boss him. I've a jolly good mind to leave tomorrow morning. I don't even enjoy being in the jungle any more, and I never want to shoot another tiger.

"Well, that's nice," she said sourly over her shoulder. They walked the rest of the way without speaking in the noise of the wind. The vultures on the tall peepul tree swayed in hunched ugly nakedness, rose with pinions spread and were swept away.

Bhagwan brought the ladder and set it against the tree.

"I'll take the rifle," said Tony. She slung her own heavy rifle over her shoulder and climbed to the machan. "O.K., Henry."

He came slowly up the ladder, using his left hand. She helped him on to the machan ; now he was sitting with his back against the trunk, sweat trickling down his dusty face.

"It's four-thirty," she said quietly. "The tiger's most likely to come just before dusk, say about half past six. We'll be back soon after seven, or earlier if we hear a shot. The rifle's the same as your own. Aim a bit low. And be careful, Henry."

"Thanks, Tony." He looked at her vaguely, not seeing her.

"Well, goodbye." She put her hand on his for a second, half smiled, and climbed down the ladder. He watched the two of them go across the glade below him and inspect the rope still tied from the dead buffalo's neck to a tree. They came back. Tony paused, looked once around the glade with that leashed coiled deliberateness which he knew so well ; then she nodded to Bhagwan, glanced up at Henry in the tree, and her long legs went into effortless movement.

The two of them, Bhagwan with the ladder and Tony with the small rifle on her shoulder, disappeared. The sound of their voices—one cracked and one contralto, lilting in the Indian speech—came through the hot sough of wind. Then they were out of sight and earshot, and Henry was alone.

It was funny old Tony saying good-bye like that, he thought. Almost as if she meant good-bye with some special meaning, not just *good-bye see you later* sort of good-bye. She's done a lot for me, that girl, and I've never thanked her properly, just accepted everything as a matter of course. I do admire the way she moves. Wish I could move that way. Some hope for a pseudo old Nimrod like me.

Henry took stock of his surroundings. He was fifteen feet or so from the ground, and the peepul tree spread out all round him. It was a secure kind of a tree to be in, even for a man with one useless arm.

Right in the middle of the glade was the dead buffalo. Every now and then a dust-devil would whirl up from the nullah beyond taking leaves and dead grass in its spinning maw ; then he would get a whiff of the dead animal, not an unpleasant smell yet, but tangy.

He knew that the chances of the tiger coming before dark were doubtful—perhaps one chance in four on a calm day, quite un-

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predictable on a day like this. But he also knew in his bones that it was going to happen ; that sometime between now and seven o'clock the tiger would appear from nowhere, and he would take slow aim or quick aim as the need arose, confident aim, and a single shot would make his dream a reality. Then he would go home to Washington, and remove all of that junk from the small room, every bit of it ; and one day the tiger, his own tiger, would arrive from the taxidermist. It would lie with its head facing the door, snarling nobly in death. I'll just shoot one, he muttered under his breath. Won't bother with any more. I only wish it had been on foot in single combat. But that's impossible. The panther makes up for it not being on foot. I'll have the panther skin in the drawing room, but not the tiger. The tiger shall be in the holy of holies, the inner sanctum.

I hope Tony's all right. I hope she's not going to eat her heart out over that scoundrel Finigan. Funny, I quite liked that guy to start with.

The wind was dropping. It still stirred the broad leaves of the peepul, still rippled over brown brittle grass, but there was no hot bluster now. It was a wind dying at the end of the day, and all the living things of the jungle must have felt relief.

Here was something. Here was a furtive jackal out before its time. It skulked to the buffalo and began to feed, looking fearfully around. Henry could hear the chop of small jaws, a pause to listen, chop and tear again ; and time went by till suddenly the wretched jackal was alert, ears cocked. It streaked mangily, tail-droopingly across the clearing and out of sight.

Henry's heart began to sound for him in his chest and his head and his ears, not loudly, but playing a warning tune. Now ; now it might be coming. He slipped forward the safety catch ; the jungle was almost quiet, only a rustle overhead.

The tigress stood at the far side of the clearing. She was still, and Henry was still. She was as different from that other tiger as a ballet-dancer is different from a heavy-weight boxer. He had been splendid in his power, but she was beautiful with an untamed slender beauty. She strolled to the middle of the glade, shoulders rippling, one step flowing into the next, head turning slowly from side to side ; this was the poetry of movement, deliberate and effortless and silent. She was tawny as she slipped from shadow into late sunlight. She lay down facing Henry and began to lick her chops.

Now was the moment, now the sights pointed at the very centre of her chest. It was a certain shot, for the heavy bullet would rake and spread down the graceful body front to back.

The young tigress, full-grown but with the sheen and softness and quick strength of youth, stopped licking the underside of her paws. She did something quite different now. She yawned and stretched herself with a lazy impersonal grace and pleasure, back legs flat behind her, head arched, claws bared.

And all of a sudden Henry Lipton did not see a tigress in the jungle glade. All of a sudden he saw Tony Marriott in the flying boat that first day. *It's boring*, she had said about flying. *It takes a*

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ICS

long long time although you get there sooner in the end. She had yawned without bothering to put her hand to her mouth, and raised her arms above her head, long fingers spread wide, and arched all her slim curved body and legs with this same indolent voluptuous grace.

My tigress, he thought in a sharp and wonderful revelation. *My tigress and my Tony Marriott, the two of them in one down there below me. Now I shall never shoot a tiger.*

ALL men and all women have their dreams. For many the dreams stay dreams. For a few they do become reality, or what we call reality. For one in a million the dream leads to the opening of a door, and yonder is a different unexpected garden.

The tigress rose and turned, went slowly, lazily, over to the dead buffalo and grasped it by the neck. She crouched forward, motionless. Then the whole of her body was unleashed in a backward shaft of power ; the rope snapped with a distinct splitting smack, and she dragged her kill across the jungle glade, into the trees beyond ; the noise of her passage faded, blended into the sighing wind.

Henry opened the double-barrelled rifle, took out the shells, put them in his pocket, found a cigarette and lit it. He did these prosaic ordinary things while his mind raced on its flabbergasting journey. Tony! he thought. Antonia Marriott! I never guessed it. I never guessed it all these weeks. I never knew it was beginning to happen that afternoon on the shores of the Persian Gulf when I tagged along behind her stalking the gazelle, when I first saw her wonderful poised stealth ; and so slender and womanly, and honest like a tigress, not treacherous like a panther. Oh, what a fool I have been, not knowing why I suddenly hated Finigan. Now I know why I abominate his guts. I'll never get her. I'll never get my arrogant indifferent adorable Queen of the Jungle, so passionate, so inscrutable. How could a man be such a dumb dope ?

But I must go back, back through the jungle which is my home now for ever, and I shall say humbly : Tony ! All my pampered life I have had a dream. I came here to find it in the Indian jungle. But I did not find the dream that I expected. I saw beyond the door into the unexpected English garden, so beautiful, so secret, so indifferent to Henry Lipton. Goodbye, Tony Marriott. I love you for ever. Think of me sometimes in your strange England.

To tell the truth, Henry was in no state for such a startling revelation. He was still in a weakened condition; and his imagination, vivid through life-long exercise, was doubly sharp today. He saw these bright pictures—of beauty and love, of remorse and self-disgust—with feverish light-headed clarity.

So now, as a man in a dream which indeed he was, he knew that he must climb down from his tree and go at once to his lady love, to his tigress, and lay his heart at her feet.

Accordingly, he did a thing which no wounded man in his senses would have done. He slung the rifle over his bad shoulder, grasped a rope-like peepul root with his left hand, slipped his legs over the edge of the machan, coiled them round the wood, and slid fifteen

feet to the ground ; all without any hesitation whatsoever. He landed in a heap. The pain in his right arm throbbed from elbow to shoulder, and every one of the fifteen stitches tightened into the flesh.

But after a while the pain lessened, and he set off. It was six o'clock. The wind had died, and even the tired jungle parched already for the monsoon whose yearly miracle lay far off, even the dust-laden air seemed a little more kindly now in the hush of evening.

It was the right day for this to happen, he thought. It was the right kind of intolerable furnace blast of a day, suddenly becoming quiet. You must see ugliness to see beauty, you must know a little hatred to know love. There was love and hate in my longing to kill a tiger, but now it is love only for my Tony tigress ; a love as pure as the high snows I cannot see this evening. Not cold like the snows, of course, but hotly pure.

He had crossed the last sandy nullah and was nearly home when the dreadful thought struck him : How can I confess to Tony ? How dare I confess that I had the tigress in my sights and did not fire ? How could she ever forgive me ? She loves them to kill them. I love them to love her. But she will never understand.

She is indifferent to me now ; but if I tell her she will despise me. No, I must pretend that nothing happened and I got bored, and I came home. Then when I feel a little rested, a little less hellishly tired, I will say that I love her. But the other I will never mention.

Just then there was a cozy clucking near at hand. A family of jungle fowl were talking, the strong-winged ancestors of all domestic poultry. It was exactly the same noise which sounded in Henry's garden at home in Washington ; for Mrs. Robbie kept hens. She insisted upon keeping them, and no protest of Henry's had ever been of the least avail. *I wish you'd sell those birds, Mrs. Robbie,* he said once irritably. *I wish you'd get rid of those blasted squawking hens. Why can't we buy our eggs ?—I was brought up to keep hens, and hens I'll keep, and I don't expect to hear the like of that strong language from a gentleman, Mr. Lipton. Fresh eggs from your own fowls was what my dad used to say in Auchtermuchty and no bought chickens in the shell. What's a wee bit of a squawk whiles ?—But it's that rooster crowing at all hours. I don't believe a rooster's necessary. In fact I asked a fellow at the club, and he said . . .—I'll not discuss such a thing,* said Mrs. Robbie. *The very idea.* And she went off in a huff and looked at him suspiciously for days afterwards.

This ridiculous small memory from his ordinary life came to him now. It did not seem funny as once it had ; it only served to sharpen his gloom and remind him of all the days when he would be lonely at home with his damned faithful Scotch housekeeper.

So it was with a heavy heart that he climbed the last slope and crossed the brown lawn of the rest-house. Tony rose from her chair on the verandah, watching him as if he were a ghost from a jungly world. He stared at her with a desperate intensity of love, seeing the new magic of her face—the wide generous mouth ; the green eyes cool and yet so easily lit with fire ; the slender nose and wide nostrils challenging ; the deep attractive tan made all the more

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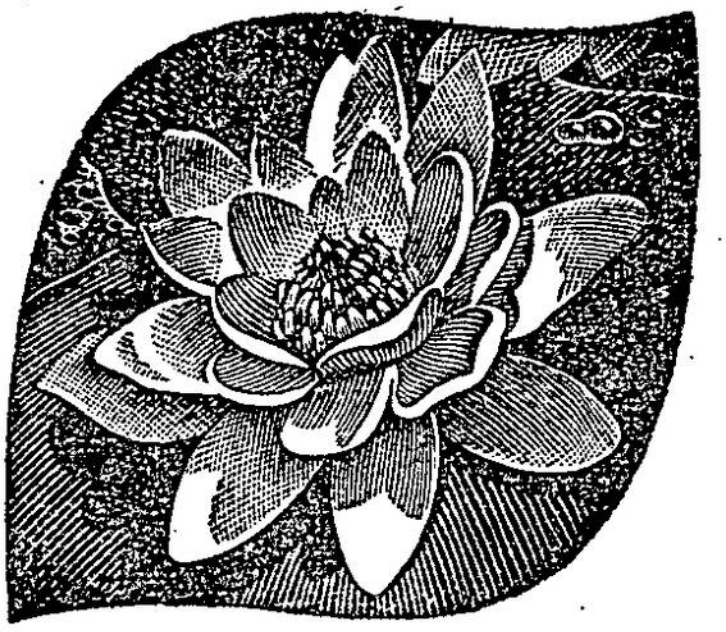

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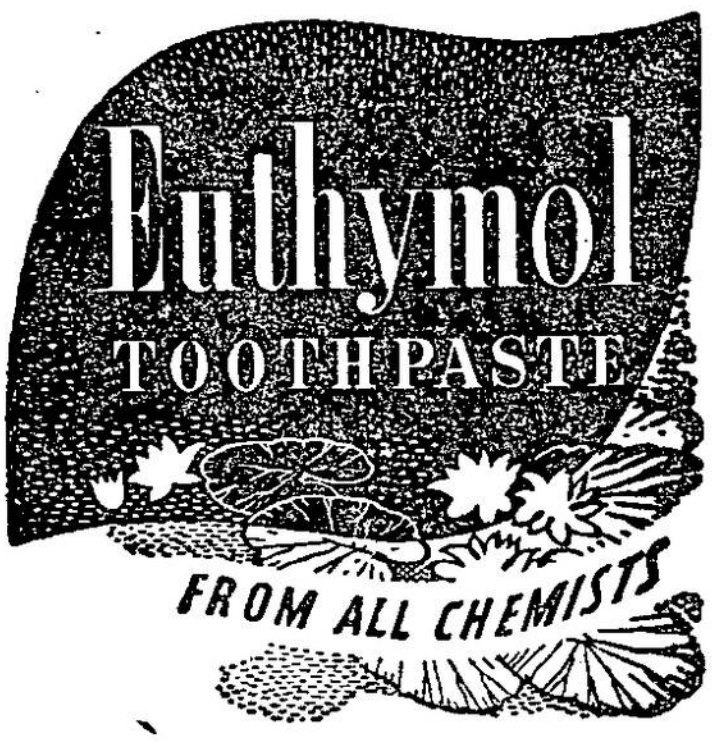

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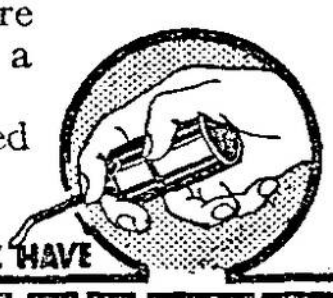

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becoming by tiny untanned wrinkles at the eyes ; the mane of tawny hair—that very self-same colour, but oh a thousand times more beautiful than any tigress. He saw her supple woman's body.

" What's wrong, Henry ? " she said, catching her breath. " What happened ? Why are you staring ? You look dreadful."

" I guess I'm tired." He was suddenly tired to the point of collapse ; and he slumped now into a chair and closed his eyes.

But she was insistent. " Did you hurt yourself, Henry ? "

" No, I'm okay."

" But how did you get down ? "

" Slid down a creeper."

" Madness," she said angrily. He felt her slip back his shirt-sleeve. " It's bleeding through the bandage." She ran off. " Oh you fool, you damned idiot," she was crying.

A damned idiot is just what I am, thought Henry while the darkness and brightness heaved and swung behind his closed eyelids.

But it was not to him that Tony was referring. She was reviling herself. She came back now with warm water and dressings.

" The stitches aren't bust," she said close to his ear.

Henry groaned with the delight of having her so near him, of feeling those gentle fingers re-wind the bandage.

" Henry, are you all right ? "

" Better," he croaked. He did feel better ; only he was thirsty. And strangely enough, even in the depth of his self-abasement he did not hesitate now to use Miss Marriott as a minister to his needs. " I wish you'd fix me a drink," said this humble unloved Sultan.

She was back in less than no time with a Scotch and soda, icy cold, prickling the roof of his mouth. He took several gulps, and the exhaustion which had swamped him a few minutes ago was now a pleasant lassitude. He opened his eyes.

They sat side by side with their legs on the long arms of the chairs. What had always before been a graceful leg, a limb of aesthetic merit, with the cool appeal of, say, an Ionic column, now had a different appeal for Henry. That long slender leg beside him burned into his consciousness to the exclusion of all else. I can't stand it, he thought. It's unbearable.

He forced himself to look away. In the west the sun was sinking to touch, was just touching the horizon ; and the copper ball flattened and widened to a glowing semi-circle, to a segment, to a dwindling rim, flashed green, and was gone.

" Here they are," said Tony.

The green parakeets were coming. They came every evening in the gathering dusk, twisting and plunging on their way to roost, screaming in exuberance. And every evening they swept over the tree-tops in the rest-house garden, diving low with long tails streaming, singing their song of speed.

Henry watched them now. He saw them dive and twist and dip and rise in a storming cavorting tumbling hurry. He watched them till the quick pageant was over for another day ; was over for ever.

" I shall miss the parakeets," said Tony. She gave a long sigh.

" Me too," said Henry. He sighed also.

" Henry ! "

" Yes ? "

" What happened, Henry ? "

" I . . . Oh nothing. I had to come away, that was all." Not enough courage. I nearly said it then. I must say it. Steel myself again. Now I'll say it. " Tony ! "

" Yes, Henry ? "

But he couldn't make it. " Legs," he muttered desperately. " Nothing but legs."

She turned right round in her chair and looked at him with such a startled expression on her face, fearing for his sanity, that he took his courage, such as it was, in both hands. " Look here, Tony," he said abruptly and unpleasantly. " I love you."

" You *what ?* "

" I said I love you, and I know it's no good because of you and Finigan and all that, but I'm telling you."

Tony had gone pale under her tan. He said it in a mad way, she thought. It's delirium. It's a touch of the sun. It can't be true. She fought against the wild hope which surged in her heart ; she drove it down, said the first thing that came into her head. " I wish you'd go to bed, Henry."

No sooner had she said that than she changed colour again. She blushed scarlet, feeling the blood mount to her head and all round her face and the back of her neck in a tide of hot embarrassment. " I mean you're not well," she gulped, longing to sink through the concrete floor of the verandah.

" I'm perfectly well," said Henry, exasperated. " Don't keep on as if I was a lunatic." He knew that his love was a hopeless love, but she oughtn't to turn right round and look at him that way. She ought to accept his avowal with dignity and kindness, the way all good women accept a love they cannot requite. Well, if she thinks I'm mad, I damn well will tell her ; I'll tell her the whole story.

" The tigress did come," he said. " She came and lay down in the middle of the glade. She was so beautiful, so graceful, so . . . so uncompromisingly sort of queen of the jungle. And suddenly it wasn't the tigress at all that I saw ; it was you. And I knew that I loved you. It hit me like a sledge-hammer. Well, not exactly like a sledge-hammer. But you were my tigress, and I knew I could never shoot a tiger." Henry looked at her, waiting for the fury and forth-right contempt she was sure to express.

" Henry ! " she gasped. " Oh, Henry ! " She believed him now. She knew that he was not mad unless it was with the madness of love. It was all incredible, and she leaped from the chair in a lithe tempestuous movement and came into his arms. So they were together in one chair, her graceful shape, and Henry's shape not graceful, locked in a long first kiss on an evening in India that was far too hot for romance. She rubbed her soft cheek against his stubbly one. " Darling, darling Lipton," she murmured. " Darling

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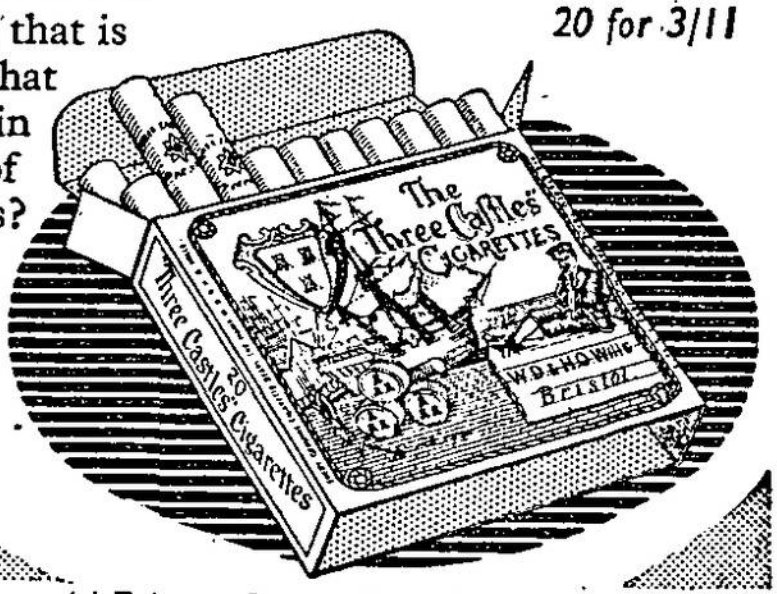

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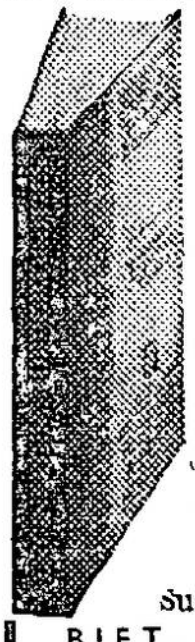

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Tony," murmured Henry. " My darling tigress." All those ecstatic loving idiocies.

Just then Bhagwan came round the corner of the bungalow, saw what was afoot, or rather a-chair, grunted quietly to himself, and went off to spread the news. " Oh what great brave hunters will be the sons of these great brave sahibs," he said to himself all the way down to the village.

" I thought you loved Caroline. I thought she was cruel to you."

" Why did you think that, you silly girl ? " But it was not an hour when questions need be answered.

" What about Finigan ? "

" Oh, that gorilla. Well, what about him ? "

" Good old Finigan."

The short velvet twilight was over. Night had come. Night had closed its warm fingers over the garden and over the jungle.

Down on the left a tiger roared—a deep challenging *grrumph* of power ; and silence fell again. Down on the right a second roar sounded, but this one had a lighter resonance, a musical contralto note, as fierce and as frightening, but different. " There she is," whispered Henry Lipton. " There's the tigress."

The tiger roared again, this time in a mellow bass, in quite a different tone of voice, almost a friendly bellow ; and he had moved. Now once more the tigress, moving too. It was to be a tiger meeting.

The last tender roar of the tiger came from straight in front. After that there was a purring silence here on the verandah and there in the jungle.

" *My* tiger," murmured Tony Marriott.

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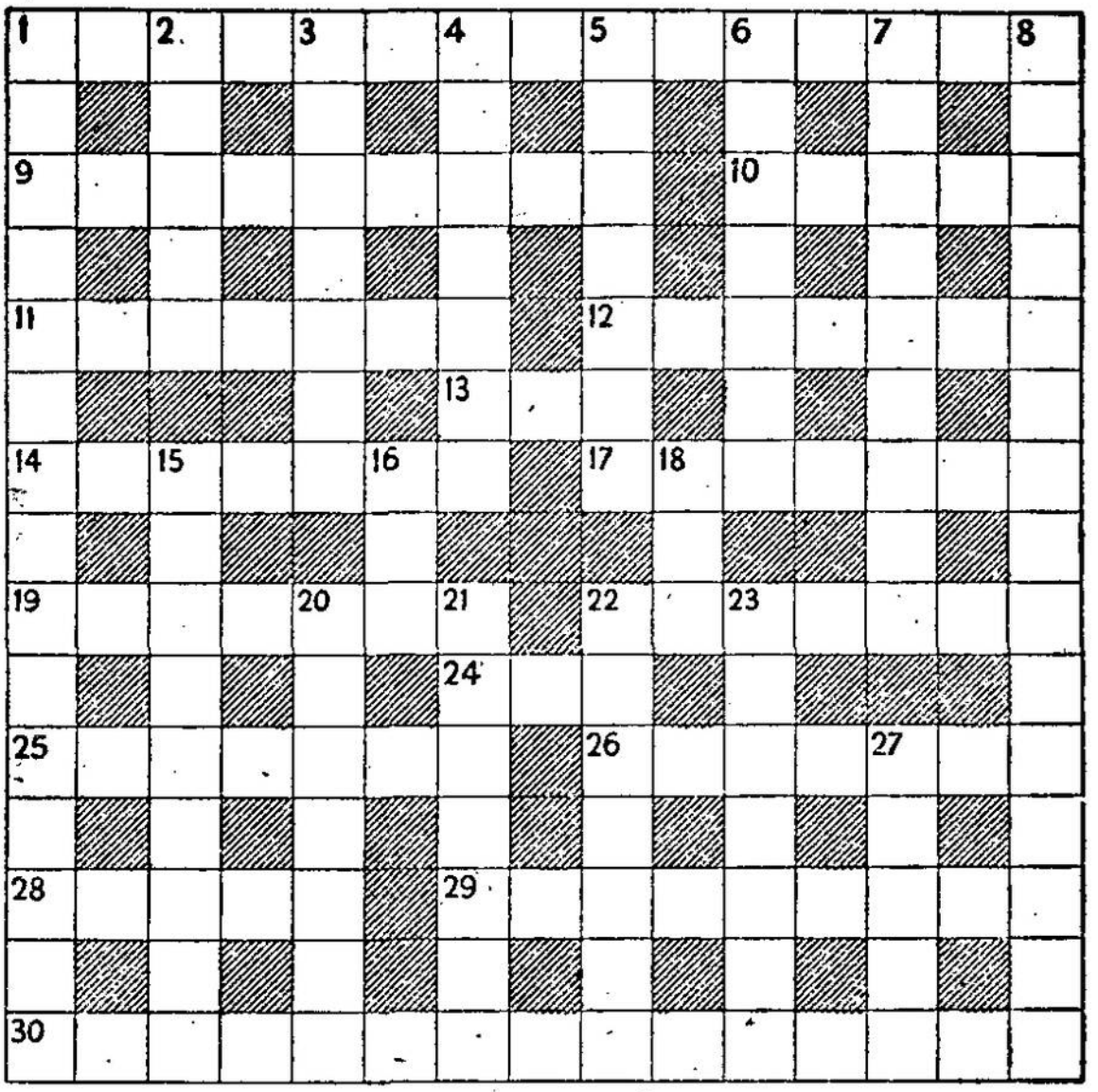
Solution on page 151



CLUES

Across

1 Rank Daedalus might have held in the R.A.F. (6, 9).

9 Ore you would find on the highway ? (4-5).

10 A hundred to one each way, and five in the middle (5).

11 Oh Death, to the impetuous ! (7).

12 There's a tot at the end of this platform ! (7).

13 " The bat that flits at close of ——— " (Blake) (3).

14 Not the sort of person to drop a brick (7).

17 " Money, I —— it ; Many people prize it " (W. S. Gilbert) (7).

19 Sleep was among his many victims (7).

22 It's conical, briefly (7).

24 As from an assumed name. He must be an Arab ! (3).

25 You might find an islander here around ten (7).

26 But the bachelors who go down from here are women ! (7).

28 To Sherlock Holmes she was *the* woman (5).

29 His fifth was the Emperor (9).

30 Not a decorated punishment but an undoubted asset (4-5, 6).

Down

1 Thermite gone ? F.B.I. were off guard pro tem. (3, 3, 4, 5).

2 Most unsuitable with Bonaparte at the heart of it ! (5).

3 By whom the Cat walked (7).

4 The fortress Cronin built (7).

5 Has she faint revolutionary tendencies ? (7).

6 Indicts with a cubic centimetre of customs (7).

7 This change of route might be an entertainment (9).

8 New beginnings (15).

15 It only sounds like a fish from S.E. Asia ; in fact it's an insect from S. America ! (9).

16 The first of Ultima Thule, but the last elsewhere (3).

18 In camera for a long time (3).

20 " Virtuous and vicious ev'ry man must be,
Few in th'——, but all in the degree " (Pope) (7).

21 This gives advice to the sidesman, but his wife carries it out (7).

22 But this cake is more appropriate to the byre than the tea-table ! (7).

23 There's a bovine casualty on the cricket pitch (7).

27 "———, and spoil, and ruin are my gain." (Milton) (5).

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